



## **GALACTIC COINTELPRO – Exposing the Covert Counter-Intelligence Program against Extraterrestrial Contactees**

**Michael E. Salla, Ph.D.<sup>1</sup>**

In the early 1950's a select group of individuals began to publicly make claims of having had direct physical contact with 'human looking' representatives of different extraterrestrial civilizations. These 'contactees' claimed to have been given knowledge of the extraterrestrials' advanced technologies, philosophical beliefs and their efforts to assist humanity in becoming part of a galactic society where open contact with off world civilizations would occur. Contactees described the Extraterrestrials as benign, very respectful of human free will, and ancestrally linked to humanity (thus dubbed the "space brothers".) Further revealed by the contactees was that extraterrestrials, who were in many cases indistinguishable from humans, had secretly integrated into human society.<sup>2</sup> The apparent goals were to better acquaint themselves with different national cultures, and/or to participate in an educational uplift program to prepare humanity for galactic status. Contactees began to disseminate to the general public the nature of their experiences and knowledge gained through interaction with extraterrestrials.

Information revealed by contactees presented an unrivaled national security crisis for policy makers in the U.S. and other major nations. Two main elements comprised this crisis. First, the advanced space vehicles and technologies possessed by extraterrestrial civilizations were far more sophisticated than the most developed aircraft, weapons and communications systems possessed by national governments. This presented an urgent technological problem that required

vast national resources to bridge the technological gap with extraterrestrials. It led to a second Manhattan project whose existence and secret funding would be known only to those with a “need to know.”<sup>3</sup> Manhattan II, along with evidence of extraterrestrial visitors and technologies, would be kept secret from the general public, the media and most elected political representatives.

Second, extraterrestrial civilizations were contacting private individuals, and even having some of their representatives integrate into human society.<sup>4</sup> This was encouraging growing numbers of individuals to participate in a covert extraterrestrial effort to prepare humanity for “galactic status” - where the existence of extraterrestrials would be officially acknowledged and open interaction would occur. Also included was the issue of nuclear disarmament.

Tens of thousands of individuals supported the contactees who distributed newsletters, spoke at conferences and traveled widely spreading their information for peacefully transforming the planet, and calling for an immediate end to the development of nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons threatened more than humanity’s future according to the extraterrestrials. Every detonation disrupted the fabric of space that could also seriously affect their own worlds in destructive ways.



Directly confronted were the policies of major nations that were actively building nuclear weapons. Enormous revolutionary potential for the entire planet was put forward. Thus, contactees presented an urgent national security need for an extensive counter-intelligence program. Preventing the contactee movement from becoming a catalyst for global changes through the teachings and experiences gained from extraterrestrials became top priority. Consequently, a highly secret and ruthless counter-intelligence program was finally implemented that directly targeted contactees and their supporters.

A series of covert intelligence programs were implemented that aimed to neutralize the revolutionary potential of the contactee movement. These programs evolved in three stages that resulted in the final counter-intelligence program that was adopted to eliminate any threat posed by contactees.

- Stage one was the initial surveillance of contactees by intelligence agencies that attempted to discern the scope and implications of human and extraterrestrial interaction.
- Stage two was the more active phase of debunking and discrediting contactees and their supporters.
- Finally, stage three was integrated into the FBI's COINTELPRO which provided the necessary cover for comprehensively neutralizing any possible threat by contactees who might join other dissident groups for comprehensive policy changes.

All three stages of the covert programs employed against contactees were secretly run by the CIA, the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) and the NSA, whose field agents were directly aware of the reality of extraterrestrial life, and the contact and communications occurring with private citizens.



*This paper concentrates on the covert counter intelligence program adopted by U.S. national security agencies that targeted contactees ever since the 1950's in an effort to nullify, discredit and debunk evidence confirming private citizen contact with extraterrestrial civilizations, and the revolutionary potential this had to transform the planet.*

### **Phase One: Intelligence Agencies Monitor Contactees**

There is extensive documentation to establish that the FBI closely monitored contactees, and were keenly interested in determining the scope of their activities resulting from communications and interactions with extraterrestrials.<sup>5</sup> **Declassified FBI documents establish that prominent contactees were subjected to close monitoring where their statements and activities were investigated, and field agents directly issued reports to the FBI Director, J. Edgar Hoover.** Field agent reports suggest that the FBI Director was seriously trying to apprise himself of the revolutionary potential posed by contactees and the threat to U.S. national security. This is not surprising given documentation that suggests the FBI was largely left out of the intelligence loop concerning extraterrestrial technologies.<sup>6</sup> Hoover was probably relying on surveillance of contactees to apprise himself of the true situation concerning extraterrestrials.



George Van Tassel [photo on left] claims that in August 1953, he had a physical meeting with human looking extraterrestrials from Venus. He subsequently established regular ‘telepathic’ communications with them where he was given information that he shared with his many supporters and public authorities. Popularity grew rapidly for Van Tassel who had many thousands that read his newsletters and attended his public lectures. Thousands also attended Van Tassel’s annual Giant Rock Flying Saucer conventions in the Mojave Desert that began in 1954, and over a 23 year period became the key annual event for the

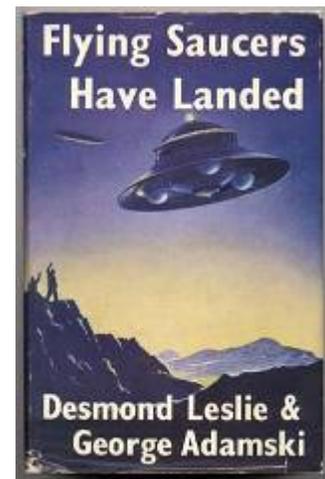
contactee movement.

FBI interest in Van Tassel dates from November 1953, when he sent a letter to the Air Technical Intelligence Center (ATIC) at Wright Patterson Air Force base on behalf of ‘Commander Ashtar’ to deliver a “friendly warning” concerning the destructive weapons then under development.<sup>7</sup> This led to a meeting between Major S. Avner of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) who met with a liaison for the FBI, and culminated in Van Tassel being interviewed by the two Special Agents on November 16, 1954. The agents sent an extensive memo to J. Edgar Hoover detailing Van Tassel’s claims to having been visited by extraterrestrials.<sup>8</sup> Revealed by the memo is Hoover’s special interest in what the extraterrestrials had to say about the atomic weapons, an upcoming Third World War, and their ability to telepathically communicate with Van Tassel. Undisputedly, Van Tassel was closely monitored by the FBI as evidenced in a document dated April 12, 1965 which states: “Van Tassel has been known to the Los Angeles FBI Office since 1954.”<sup>9</sup>

Another contactee who received much FBI attention was George Adamski. Adamski first became known in 1947 for his photos of flying saucers and motherships taken with an amateur telescope on Mount Palomar, California, that received wide coverage. He became the most well known of all contactees due to his internationally bestselling books describing his meetings with extraterrestrials. The first book, *Flying Saucers Have Landed* (1953), was based on his November 20, 1952 Desert Center encounter with ‘Orthon’ the Venusian occupant of an extraterrestrial scoutcraft. Orthon proceeded to tell Adamski about the dangers posed by nuclear

weapons and the possibility that all life could be destroyed in an uncontrolled nuclear reaction. Four months later, in February 1953, Adamski claimed to have had another encounter. He was picked up by two extraterrestrials at a Los Angeles hotel lobby, and driven to a secret location where he again met Orthon and was taken inside a Venusian mothercraft.<sup>10</sup> Adamski's UFO sightings and contacts with extraterrestrials were supported by an impressive collection of witnesses, photographs and films that a number of independent investigators concluded were not hoaxes.<sup>11</sup>

Interest in Adamski by the FBI began in September 1950 when a confidential source began relaying information to the FBI's San Diego office. According to the source, Adamski explained that the social system used by the extraterrestrials most closely resembled communism. This "raised eyebrows within the FBI, and led to continued, deep monitoring."<sup>12</sup> Also according to the FBI source, Adamski claimed, "this country is a corrupt form of government and capitalists are enslaving the poor."<sup>13</sup> Predictably, such comments led to Adamski being viewed as a "security matter."<sup>14</sup> The source was



never revealed by the FBI and so there was no way to evaluate the source's objectivity in relaying such prejudicial information. Adamski's claims that the extraterrestrials viewed the development of nuclear weapons as a threat of the future of humanity, was a cause of deep concern among officials. It was such views that led to the FBI considering him, along with George Van Tassel, as a subversive that required close monitoring according to a 1952 document.<sup>15</sup>

A lecture by Adamski at a California Lions Club on March 12, 1953, was covered by a local newspaper that reported that Adamski had official FBI and Air Force clearance to present his material to the public. According to Adamski this newspaper report was 'incorrect', but led to a visit by FBI and Air Force representatives who were apparently concerned by references to official clearance.<sup>16</sup> The representatives demanded that Adamski sign a document that his material did not have official clearance. J. Edgar Hoover's office received the FBI and Air Force representatives' report, together with the signed document. Popularity and Adamski's

international travel led to the FBI and other intelligence agencies paying close attention to his statements and public reactions. Adamski claimed to have been given private audiences with Pope John XXIII, Queen Juliana of the Netherlands and other VIP's.<sup>17</sup> In February 1959 Adamski traveled to New Zealand, and spoke before packed audiences. A one page Foreign Service Dispatch with Adamski's key talking points was circulated to the FBI, CIA, Air Force and Navy thus confirming continued monitoring of Adamski.

Other contactees who were monitored by the FBI according to declassified documents included Daniel Fry, George Hunt Williamson, and Truman Bethurum.<sup>18</sup> Information relayed by contactees concerning the social and economic systems of the extraterrestrials, together with the extraterrestrials' criticism of the nuclear weapons development occurring around the globe, led to them and their supporters being considered a security threat. Given U.S. national hysteria over communism during the McCarthy Era, this led to counter-intelligence programs being implemented against the contactees. Debunking and discrediting contactee claims were the most significant activities that occurred.

### **Phase Two: Debunking & Discrediting Contactees**

An active role was played by the CIA in creating the necessary legal, political and social environment for the debunking of flying saucer reports and discrediting contactee claims. It did so by depicting flying saucer reports as a national security threat insofar as mass hysteria over them could be exploited by foreign enemies. Solid justification for such a psychological program was built on the famous 1938 radio broadcast by Orson Welles. A renowned book on Wells' broadcast by Dr Hadley Cantril focused on the psychology of panic, and was later widely cited by national security experts in relation to public interest over flying saucer reports.<sup>19</sup> Consequently the CIA led covert psychological operations that would 'educate' the American public about the 'correct facts' concerning flying saucer reports and contactee claims. One of the first actions taken by the CIA was to initiate the creation of an inter-agency government group called the Psychological Strategy Board that would deal with national security threats through covert psychological operations.

A Presidential Directive on April 4, 1951, created the Psychological Strategy Board "to authorize and provide for the more effective planning, coordination, and conduct within the framework of approved national policies, of psychological operations."<sup>20</sup> Initially set up by Gordon Gray, a top advisor to President Truman at the time (and also later with President Eisenhower), the Psychological Strategy Board was an interagency organization that was initially located within the CIA, but reported to the National Security Council. Ostensibly the Psychological Strategy Board would lead covert psychological operations to deal with the Cold War threat.



July 18, 1951. Gordon Gray (right), being administered the oath as the first Director of the new Psychological Strategy Board by Frank K. Sanderson (left), while President Harry S. Truman (center) witnesses the event. Source: Truman Library Collection.

The Cold War threat was a cover for its true function. In reality, the Psychological Strategy Board was created to deal with the national security threat posed by flying saucer reports and contactee claims that could undermine the authority of the U.S. government. Evidenced in leaked government documents, Gray is described as a founding member of the secret control group, allegedly titled Majestic-12 Special Studies Group (MJ-12), which took charge of the extraterrestrial issue.<sup>21</sup> According to one of the leaked Majestic Documents, President Truman created the Psychological Strategy Board after recommendation by the head of MJ-12.<sup>22</sup> Gray's leadership and the role of MJ-12 in its creation, helps confirm that the Psychological Strategy Board was created to run psychological operations to shape public opinion on the extraterrestrial issue.

Psychological Strategy Board success, together with its successor the Operations Coordinating Board, and all covert psychological operations concerning extraterrestrial life, was to only disclose the truth to those with a "need to know."<sup>23</sup> This required the creation of a suitable national security cover for psychological operations against the American public. Victory would be achieved by the formation of a panel of experts that could shape government policy and

intelligence activities against those involved in extraterrestrial affairs. Consequently, the CIA secretly convened a public panel of ‘impartial’ experts to discuss the available physical evidence.

Named after its chairman, Dr Howard Robertson, the Robertson Panel reviewed cases of flying saucers over a four-day period for a total of 12 hours and found none of them to be credible. Conclusions by the Panel were released in a document called the Durant Report. It recommended ridiculing the ‘flying saucer phenomenon’ and the possibility of extraterrestrial life, for national security reasons. The Report is key to understanding the institutionally sanctioned debunking and discrediting of evidence concerning extraterrestrial life. Confirmation of the leading role of the CIA in convening the panel and choosing experts appears in the Durant Report itself, despite efforts to suppress the CIA’s role in early releases of sanitized versions. The CIA’s Intelligence Advisory Committee had agreed that the “Director of Central Intelligence will ... [e]nlist the services of selected scientists to review and appraise the available evidence in the light of pertinent scientific theories...”<sup>24</sup>

Almost exclusively the Report focused on the national security threat posed by foreign powers exploiting the American public’s belief in the flying saucer phenomenon. It declared: “Subjectivity of public to mass hysteria and greater vulnerability to possible enemy psychological warfare ... [and] if reporting channels are saturated with false and poorly documented reports, our capability of detecting hostile activity will be reduced.”<sup>25</sup> Consequently, the Robertson panel recommended an ‘educational program’ to remove the threat posed by enemy nations exploiting the public’s belief in flying saucers:



The Panel’s concept of a broad educational program integrating efforts of all concerned agencies was that it should have two major aims: training and “debunking.” ...The “debunking” aim would result in reduction in public interest in “flying saucers” which today evokes a strong psychological reaction. This education could be accomplished by mass media such as television, motion pictures, and popular articles.... Such a program

should tend to reduce the current gullibility of the public and consequently their susceptibility to clever hostile propaganda.<sup>26</sup>

In conclusion, a Panel convened by the CIA, with experts chosen by the CIA, reviewed a selection of flying saucer cases over a 12 hour period spread over four days, and concluded that the public's psychological reaction to flying saucers was the basis of a possible security threat. The Cold War provided the necessary security environment for the CIA and interagency entities such as the Psychological Strategy Board, to claim that flying saucers could be exploited by the Soviet Union using psychological warfare techniques. Consequently, psychological operations would have to be conducted through the mass media and official agencies to debunk flying saucer reports, and remove the possible threat. Irrespective of the truth of contactee's claims of having met with extraterrestrials, this meant the public's possible reaction to the reality of flying saucers and extraterrestrial life justified debunking all contactee reports. Debunking techniques that could be used to discredit contactees as reliable witnesses and make their claims appear ridiculous included: making fun of contactee claims, media exaggeration of reported events, dismissal of all physical evidence by critics, repeatedly citing prominent authority figures who stressed delusion and fraud, and emphasizing the lack of scientific interest in contactee reports.

**The Durant Report created the necessary legal justification to debunk evidence provided by contactees regardless of the merits of their claims.** This is evidenced by the way in which the FBI and other intelligence agencies privately interacted with contactees, and then made public statements or leaked information to the media in ways that questioned the integrity of contactees. For example, Adamski had communicated with the FBI, AFOSI and the Pentagon over the content of material he would put in his books, or documents he would present to the public. This is not surprising given that many contactees, like Adamski, were former military servicemen that understood the importance of not doing anything to threaten national security. Adamski was led to believe that he was cleared to distribute a particular document, and had made public statements to this effect. This led to the head of the FBI's public relations department, Louis B. Nichols, instructing Special Agent Willis to meet with Adamski concerning the particular document in question. A subsequent FBI report dated 16 December 1953, stated:

Willis was told to have the San Diego agents, accompanied by representatives of OSI if they care to go along, call on Adamski and read the riot act in no uncertain terms pointing out he has used this document in a fraudulent, improper manner, that this Bureau has not endorsed, approved, or cleared his speeches or book.<sup>27</sup>

The FBI made public its views about Adamski’s alleged behavior in a way that delivered a “huge blow to Adamski’s credibility.”<sup>28</sup> At the time when the general public believed unquestionably in the accuracy of statements made by public officials, such negative comments would be sufficient to end one’s career or credibility. Certainly, many in the general public interested in the flying saucer phenomenon now believed Adamski to be a fraud. This was especially so for those advocating a scientific investigation of flying saucers. What the public did not realize was that intelligence agencies such as the FBI and AFOSI were intent on debunking contactees as a matter of policy due to the threat they posed to national security. Thus contactees could be easily “set up” to believe something informally told to them by insiders, and then be publicly confronted by other officials claiming they had made fraudulent statements when they could not confirm what they had been told.



The World Weekly News (an offshoot of the National Enquirer) ran from 1979-2007

Another way in which contactee claims were debunked was to have tabloid newspapers such as the National Enquirer publish sensational reports that embellished on actual contactee testimonies or were entirely fabricated by staff reporters. Any subsequent investigations by researchers would demonstrate that such claims were exaggerated or unfounded, thereby tainting the contactees and UFO research more generally. What was not generally known was that the National Enquirer was created and controlled by known CIA assets whose covert assignment was to ridicule the entire flying saucer phenomena. Gene Pope bought the New York Enquirer in 1952, and relaunched it as *The National Enquirer* in 1954. Pope was listed in his Who’s Who biography as being a former CIA intelligence officer and being involved in “psychological warfare.”<sup>29</sup> Chief instrument of the covert psychological operations used to debunk contactee claims and flying saucer reports was *The National Enquirer* with its sensationalistic tabloid style. *The National Enquirer* along with

other media sources covering contactee claims were part of the education program that required the debunking of flying saucer reports. Predictably, the result of the sensationalist tabloid approach to contactee claims was that serious reporters and researchers would avoid stories covered by *The National Enquirer*.

**As one of the chief instruments of the covert psychological warfare being conducted by the CIA and other intelligence agencies against contactees, the National Enquirer was a great success.** It succeeded so well that influential UFO researchers determined to establish the scientific merit in investigating UFO reports, became unwitting allies to the covert psychological program to dismiss contactee claims. This is evidenced in remarks by leading UFO researchers such as Major Donald Keyhoe who emphasized the need to separate genuine UFO reports from “the mass of wild tales and usually ridiculous “contactee” claims”.<sup>30</sup> Keyhoe along with other UFO researchers were greatly concerned about contactee claims that were being exaggerated by the press, “the press unfortunately lump all “spacemen” reports together causing many people to reject all of the UFO evidence.”<sup>31</sup> Essentially, Keyhoe viewed contactee reports as an embarrassment that needed to be separated from the more scientifically oriented UFO research. Other prominent UFO researchers followed Keyhoe’s approach thus creating a major schism among those convinced extraterrestrial life was visiting the earth. Successful debunking of reports of flying saucers and extraterrestrial life made it possible for the CIA, FBI and military intelligence agencies, to move to the third stage of their covert psychological operations. Next, full scale counter-intelligence warfare techniques to disrupt and neutralize the contactee movement.

### **Phase Three: Galactic COINTELPRO**

COINTELPRO was a counter intelligence program initiated in 1956 against political dissidents that reportedly ended in 1971. It was primarily run by the FBI; other intelligence agencies such as the CIA and NSA assisted in select covert activities. COINTELPRO assumed that political dissidents in the U.S. were being influenced by foreign powers in ways deemed a threat to U.S. national security. It is worth reviewing the techniques used by COINTELPRO with regard to political dissidents to understand what occurred against contactees. In the case of both contactees and political dissidents, the influence of “foreign powers” was thought to justify military style

counter-intelligence programs to disrupt and neutralize these groups. The “off world” nature of one of these ‘foreign powers’, extraterrestrials, did not appreciably change the nature of the counterintelligence methods used against both ‘contactees’ and political dissidents. In both cases, the activities of these groups were deemed to be threats to U.S. national security.

There were two significant differences in how COINTELPRO was respectively used against political dissidents and contactees. First, while intelligence agents were fully briefed about the ‘foreign powers’ influencing political dissidents, it is unlikely they were fully briefed in the case contactees. Second, while COINTELPRO against political dissidents was exposed and apparently ended in 1971, the COINTELPRO used against contactees was never exposed. It almost certainly continues to the present.



In 1975, a U.S. Senate committee chaired by Senator Frank Church investigated COINTELPRO’s methods and targets, and published a detailed report in 1976.<sup>32</sup> The Church Committee described COINTELPRO as follows:

COINTELPRO is the FBI acronym for a series of covert action programs directed against domestic groups. In these programs, the Bureau went beyond the collection of intelligence to secret action defined to "disrupt" and "neutralize" target groups and individuals. The techniques were adopted wholesale from wartime counterintelligence...

33

Counterintelligence, as defined by the Church Committee, constitutes “those actions by an intelligence agency intended to protect its own security and to undermine hostile intelligence operations.”<sup>34</sup> The Committee described how “certain techniques the Bureau had used against hostile foreign agents were adopted for use against perceived domestic threats to the established political and social order.”<sup>35</sup> The Committee described COINTELPRO as a series of covert actions taken against American citizens, and was part of a “rough, tough, dirty business”

according to William Sullivan, assistant to the FBI Director.<sup>36</sup> The Committee learned that: “Groups and individuals have been harassed and disrupted because of their political views and their lifestyle...”<sup>37</sup>

The Committee found that COINTELPRO had “been directed against proponents of racial causes and women's rights, outspoken apostles of nonviolence and racial harmony; establishment politicians; religious groups; and advocates of new life styles.”<sup>38</sup> Between the years 1960-1974, over 500,000 investigations had been launched of potential subversives of the U.S. government, but no charges were ever laid under statutes concerning overthrow of the U.S. government.<sup>39</sup> The Committee grouped the activities conducted by COINTELPRO under the following headings: (a). General Efforts to Discredit; (b) Media Manipulation; (c) Distorting Data to Influence Government Policy and Public Perceptions; (d) "Chilling" First Amendment Rights; and (e) Preventing the Free Exchange of Ideas.<sup>40</sup> The Committee found that: “Officials of the intelligence agencies occasionally recognized that certain activities were illegal, ... [and] that the law, and the Constitution were simply ignored.”<sup>41</sup> More disturbingly, the Church Committee concluded that: “Unsavory and vicious tactics have been employed.”<sup>42</sup>

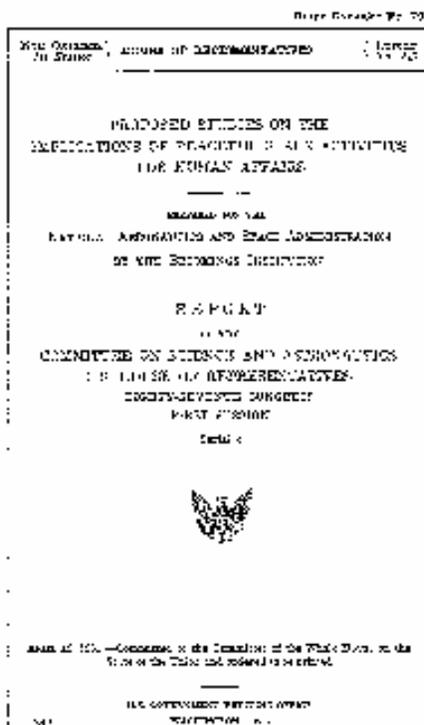
The Church Committee did not discuss COINTELPRO in regard to the UFO issue or contactee claims. Despite that omission, circumstantial evidence clearly points to COINTELPRO being used against contactees, and was the final stage of well orchestrated counter-intelligence program to "disrupt" and "neutralize" the contactee movement. As shown earlier in the cases of Van Tassel and Adamski, contactee claims dealing with a range of socio-economic and military policies from the perspective of extraterrestrial life, were viewed as subversive and a direct threat to U.S. national security.

The full nature of the threat posed by the reality of extraterrestrial life and technologies was vividly evidenced in the 1961 Brookings Institute Report commissioned by NASA on behalf of the U.S. Congress. Titled, “Proposed Studies on the Implications of Peaceful Space Activities for Human Affairs,” the Brookings Report discussed the societal impact of extraterrestrial life or ‘artifacts’ being found on nearby planetary bodies. The Report described the unpredictability of societal reactions to such a discovery:

Evidences of its [extraterrestrial] existence might also be found in artifacts left on the moon or other planets. The consequences for attitudes and values are unpredictable, but would vary profoundly in different cultures and between groups within complex societies; a crucial factor would be the nature of the communication between us and the other beings.<sup>43</sup>

Devastating societal effects, according to the Report, could result from contact with more technologically advanced off world societies:

Anthropological files contain many examples of societies, sure of their place in the universe, which have disintegrated when they had to associate with previously unfamiliar societies espousing different ideas and different life ways; others that survived such an experience usually did so by paying the price of changes in values and attitudes and behavior.<sup>44</sup>



The Brookings Report went on to raise the possibility of suppressing any announcement of extraterrestrial life or artifacts for national security reasons: “How might such information, under what circumstances, be presented or withheld from the public?”<sup>45</sup> Consequently, it is clear that official fear over societal responses to any official announcement of extraterrestrial life was a paramount national security concern. A powerful justification for the use of COINTELPRO against contactees had been found.

One of the most important tactics used by COINTELPRO was to disrupt dissident groups by creating divisions and suspicion among their supporters. In the ‘Galactic’ version of COINTELPRO, disruption occurred by dividing those who accepted evidence confirming the reality of UFO’s and extraterrestrial life. A division

between exponents of a purely scientific approach to UFO data and those supporting the testimonies of contactees was cleverly exploited by COINTELPRO operatives. Victory would be achieved by convincing more technically oriented supporters of a purely scientific approach that the contactee movement would discredit “serious” researchers. To help convince supporters of a scientific approach that their efforts would eventually bear fruit, an official Air Force investigation was launched in 1952. Project Blue Book was little more than a public relations exercise by the U.S. Air Force to convince the general public and UFO researchers that it was taking UFO reports seriously. In reality, Project Blue Book provided minimal resources for a serious UFO investigation and primarily acted as a vehicle for defusing public interest in UFO reports.<sup>46</sup>

One of Project Blue Book’s primary functions was to carry out the first plank of the “education program” recommended by the Durant Report. It would “train” the general public how to correctly evaluate the UFO data in ways that would defuse public and media interest in such reports. In short, Project Blue was a key part of the covert psychological operations being conducted to convince the general public and media that UFO reports were not important, and not worth considering. Nevertheless, the status of Project Blue Book as an official Air Force investigation encouraged UFO researchers that rigorous sufficient methods and research would eventually bear fruit. Such hopes were dashed in 1969 by the Condon Committee’s final report which publicly put an end to the Air Force investigation and Project Blue Book.

Another primary function of Project Blue Book was to neutralize the contactee movement by depicting personal testimonies of contact with extraterrestrials as unscientific. **By providing a highly visible public investigation, Project Blue Book provided the necessary ‘training’ for scientific research that would systematically exclude contactee reports.** UFO researchers would be encouraged to attack contactee reports as unscientific, prone to delusion or fraud, and an insult to ‘serious’ UFO research. Statements by leading UFO researchers such as Dr Allen Hynek, a former consultant to Project Blue Book, provide evidence that such a process occurred. In a book purporting to provide the scientific foundations of UFO research, Dr J. Allen Hynek dismissed testimonies of contactees who he regarded as “pseudoreligious fanatics” with “low credibility value.”

I must emphasize that contact reports are *not* classed as Close Encounters of the Third Kind. It is unfortunate, to say the least, that reports such as these have brought down upon the entire UFO problem the opprobrium and ridicule of scientists and public alike, keeping alive the popular image of “little green men” and the fictional atmosphere surrounding that aspect of the subject.<sup>47</sup>

As Hynek’s statement makes clear, UFO researchers attacked contactee reports with great vigor to defuse what they considered to be a major challenge to serious public consideration of UFO reports. By encouraging UFO researchers that a purely scientific method would result in the truth about UFOs and extraterrestrial life eventually coming out, Galactic COINTELPRO succeeded in creating a major schism among those accepting the reality of UFOs and extraterrestrial life. By the end of the 1960’s, the contactee movement had been so thoroughly debunked and discredited by UFO researchers, that COINTELPRO no longer needed to have Project Blue Book continue. **UFO researchers had become an unwitting accomplice of intelligence agencies secretly conducting the various covert psychological programs that made up Galactic COINTELPRO.**

Galactic COINTELPRO also had a more sinister side in terms of “unsavory and vicious tactics” that were employed contactees that reflected methods used against political dissidents.<sup>48</sup> The mysterious Men In Black (MIB) phenomenon has been described by various researchers who discovered that individuals with extraterrestrial related experiences were often threatened and harassed by well dressed men in dark business suits who gave the appearance of being public officials. Evidence that elite intelligence groups were tasked to intimidate, harasses and even “neutralize” contactees or others with direct experience with extraterrestrials or their technology appears in a leaked document that a number of veteran UFO researchers consider to be legitimate.<sup>49</sup> The Special Operations Manuel states:



If at all possible, witnesses will be held incommunicado until the extent of their knowledge and involvement can be determined. Witnesses will be discouraged from talking about what they have seen, and intimidation may be necessary to ensure their cooperation.<sup>50</sup>

Investigations were also conducted by the US Air Force that was concerned by reports that MIB impersonated Air Force officials. A March 1, 1967 memo prepared by the Assistant Vice Chief of Staff described incidents where civilians had been contacted by individuals claiming to be members of NORAD and demanded evidence possessed by witnesses.<sup>51</sup>

The shadowy operations of the MIB and the SOM1-01 document suggests that they were part of an “enforcement” division of the counter-intelligence effort that comprised the FBI, the Air Force’s OSI, the Navy Office of Naval Intelligence and even the CIA. It’s very possible that MIB were associated with more secretive intelligence agencies such as the National Security Agency (NSA) and National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) where selected agents had higher security clearances for dealing with evidence of extraterrestrial life.<sup>52</sup>

Consequently, a pecking order existed among the intelligence agencies involved in Galactic COINTELPRO where each conducted specific functions. Agents drawn from the FBI, the Air Force OSI (and other military intelligence units including the Navy’s ONI) were primarily involved in intelligence gathering, and closely monitoring the activities of contactees as evidenced in FOIA documents. The CIA was involved in coordinating debunking and discrediting efforts against contactees through a public education program outlined in the Durant Report. The NSA and NRO were involved in tracking communications and interactions with extraterrestrial life, and provided enforcement teams to withdraw evidence and intimidate contactees into silence. Galactic COINTELPRO could therefore minimize the amount of extraterrestrial related information held by different sections in each intelligence agency where agents were instructed to perform specific functions. Most out of the loop concerning the reality of extraterrestrial life and the merit of contactee claims was the FBI. On the other hand, the NSA and NRO appeared to be most in the loop due to their monitoring of extraterrestrial activities

through electronic communication and satellite imagery. Military intelligence agencies appeared to fill intermediate functions where they supported Galactic COINTELPRO without being given access to all information concerning extraterrestrial life and projects. This is evidenced in Vice Admiral Tom Wilson, the head of Intelligence for the Joint Chiefs of Staff (J-2) in 1998 who reportedly was out of the loop on extraterrestrial related projects.<sup>53</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Galactic COINTELPRO against contactees aimed to minimize the threat posed by human looking extraterrestrials to the policies adopted by secretly appointed committees with regard to extraterrestrial life and technologies. Primarily the threat from the extraterrestrials was that they would succeed in having contactees convince large portions of the American and global public for comprehensive policy changes to



prepare humanity for status as a galactic society. Such policy changes were considered a direct security threat by policy makers in the U.S. and in other countries who were briefed about the reality of extraterrestrial life. Galactic COINTELPRO involved three interrelated phases that culminated in a comprehensive counter-intelligence program to neutralize and disrupt the threat posed by the contactee movement. First was a surveillance program orchestrated by the FBI which closely monitored the contactee's public lectures, interactions and communications. Documents released through FOIA have confirmed that the FBI conducted extensive monitoring of prominent contactees, and worked with other intelligence agencies such as the Air Force OSI.

The second phase of Galactic COINTELPRO was a debunking and discrediting program secretly run by the CIA which convened the Robertson Panel which issued the Durant Report in 1953. Its most important finding for the counter-intelligence program was to justify an education program comprising 'training' the public and 'debunking' witness testimonies, including contactees, on the basis of the national security threat posed by the public's belief in UFO's being exploited by foreign enemies. Irrespective of the merit of contactee claims, this meant that evidence and statements would be debunked and discredited on national security grounds. Intelligence

professionals in the unenviable position of debunking and discrediting people who they may have privately concluded were genuinely describing actual events that had occurred to them. FBI documents establish that FBI agents and sources played an active role in discrediting prominent contactees as part of the CIA's psychological program against contactees.

Galactic COINTELPRO's final stage was to create a schism between those accepting evidence of extraterrestrial life. A group of UFO researchers advocating a scientific methodology were encouraged to disassociate themselves from contactee claims that were regarded as unscientific, and unlikely to lead to public support by academics, bureaucrats and congressional representatives. Project Blue Book was created to encourage UFO researchers to hold on to the misguided belief that a strict scientific methodology would be sufficient to overturn government policy on covering up the reality of extraterrestrial life. UFO researchers therefore led the charge against contactee claims being seriously considered. Aided by the Project Blue Book investigation, the public was trained in what categories of UFO evidence ought to be considered legitimate. None of these categories included contactee claims.

Galactic COINTELPRO could not have succeeded without the unwitting assistance of veteran UFO researchers who were all too eager to dismiss contactee claims as unscientific and prone to delusion or fraud. Such researchers failed miserably to anticipate the Galactic COINTELPRO that had been implemented to disrupt and neutralize contactee testimonies, and readily accepted official statements questioning the integrity of contactee claims. Indeed, the eagerness with which UFO researchers established themselves as the gatekeepers of serious scientific research into UFOs, and debunked contactee claims marks the most tragic aspect of six decades of research into UFOs and extraterrestrial life.

Another key factor in the success of Galactic COINTELPRO to the present has been the compartmentalization of extraterrestrial related information. This made it possible for intelligence agencies to perform specific functions within Galactic COINTELPRO without agents being informed of the truth of contactee claims. The success of debunking and discrediting contactees would have to depend on intelligence agents believing contactees were a genuine security threat. Consequently, extraterrestrial related information was made available on

a strict need to know basis ensuring that only a selected group of individuals within different intelligence agencies were briefed at all.

A summary table can be compiled for key intelligence agencies, their respective activities in Galactic COINTELPRO, and their level of access to extraterrestrial related information.

**Table 1. U.S. Intelligence Agencies and Galactic COINTELPRO**

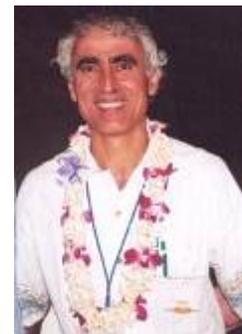
Agency	Activities	Access to Extraterrestrial Related Information
Federal Bureau of Investigations	Intelligence gathering, withdrawing evidence, and discrediting contactees by local field agents.	<i>None.</i> FBI Director Hoover was denied access and did not have capacities for monitoring extraterrestrial activities.
Air Force Office of Special Investigations (with cooperation of other military intelligence units, e.g., Office of Naval Intelligence)	Intelligence gathering, withdrawing evidence, discrediting contactees, through Project Blue Book. Create schisms among UFO/ET researchers	<i>Partial.</i> Military Intelligence monitors extraterrestrial activities, possible contacts with civilians, and pass these on to other agencies.
Central Intelligence Agency	Leads a public education program through training the public and debunking contactee reports. Create schisms among UFO/ET researchers	<i>Partial.</i> Coordinates an interagency effort to ensure extraterrestrial related information is not made public.
National Security Agency and National Reconnaissance Organization	Provides enforcement teams to withdraw evidence and intimidate contactees into silence.	<i>Full.</i> Monitors extraterrestrial life and its interactions with private citizens and governments.
Psychological Strategy Board/ Operations Coordinating Board (successor agency coordinates with control group for ET affairs, MJ-12)	Coordinates interagency efforts in covert psychological programs to deceive public about extraterrestrial life.	<i>Full.</i> Has access to full range of information provided by intelligence agencies in order to develop a strategic response to extraterrestrial activities.

In conclusion, many pioneering men and women who may have accurately related their physical contact with extraterrestrials had their reputations and careers systematically undermined by public officials, the mass media and UFO researchers. It appears that such an outcome was

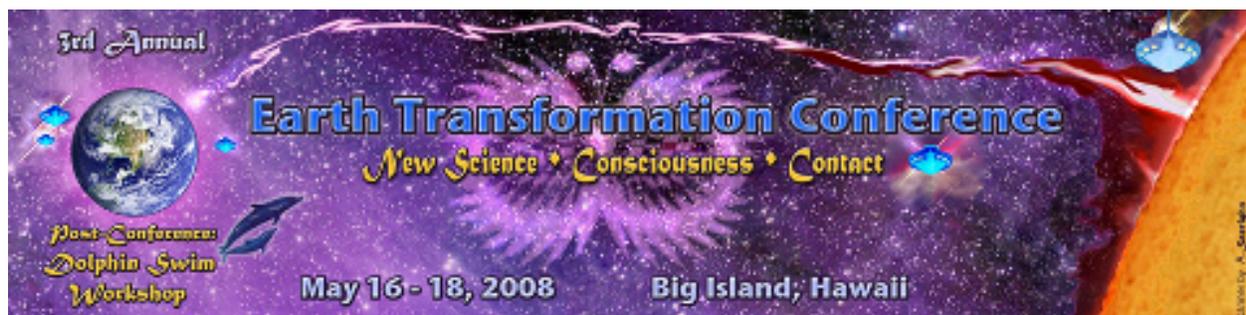
intended as part of an official Galactic COINTELPRO that continues to the present day. In contrast to the termination of the FBI's COINTELPRO against political dissidents in 1971; it is very likely that individuals in public office, the mass media and among the UFO research community may be active agents of an ongoing COINTELPRO against contactees. It is hoped that exposure of Galactic COINTELPRO will help dispel the reflexive dismissal of contactee testimonies that has up to the present hindered an objective evaluation of direct physical contact between private citizens and extraterrestrial life.

\*\*\*

**About the Author:** Michael E. Salla, PhD., is the author of *Exopolitics: Political Implications of the Extraterrestrial Presence* (Dandelion Books, 2004) and founder of [www.Exopolitics.Org](http://www.Exopolitics.Org). He has held full time academic appointments at the Australian National University, and American University, Washington DC. He has a [PhD](#) in Government from the University of Queensland, Australia. He is the Founder of the Exopolitics Institute ([www.exopoliticsinstitute.org](http://www.exopoliticsinstitute.org)), Chief Editor of the *Exopolitics Journal*, and Co-Organizer of a number of conferences dealing with exopolitics topics including the 2008 Earth Transformation: New Science, Consciousness and Contact Conference.



\*\*\*



*For Conference Information visit: <http://www.EarthTransformation.com>*

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> I am very grateful to Angelika Sareighn Whitecliff for her stylistic improvements to this article.
- <sup>2</sup> See Michael Salla, "Extraterrestrials Among Us," *Exopolitics Journal* 1:4 (2006) 284 -300. Available online at: <http://exopoliticsjournal.com/Journal-vol-1-4.htm>
- <sup>3</sup> See Michael Salla, "The Black Budget Report: An Investigation into the CIA's 'Black Budget' and the Second Manhattan Project," *Scoop Independent News* (30 January 2004): <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL0401/S00151.htm>
- <sup>4</sup> See Michael Salla, "Extraterrestrials Among Us," *Exopolitics Journal* 1:4 (2006) 284 -300. Available online at: <http://exopoliticsjournal.com/Journal-vol-1-4.htm>
- <sup>5</sup> See Nick Redfern, *On the Trail of the Saucer Spies* (Anomalist Books, 2006).
- <sup>6</sup> See FBI (FOIA) document released on 06/09/1986 concerning J. Edgar Hoover claim that the FBI was being denied access to recovered Flying Discs, available online at: [http://www.cufon.org/cufon/foia\\_001.htm](http://www.cufon.org/cufon/foia_001.htm) .
- <sup>7</sup> See Redfern, *On the Trail of the Saucer Spies*, 24.
- <sup>8</sup> Redfern, *On the Trail of the Saucer Spies*, 25.
- <sup>9</sup> Available in Redfern, *On the Trail of the Saucer Spies*, 23.
- <sup>10</sup> George Adamski, *Inside the Spaceships* (Abelard-Schuman, 1955).
- <sup>11</sup> An impartial assessment of the Adamski case is provided by Lou Zinsstag and Timothy Good in *George Adamski-The Untold Story* (Ceti Publications, 1983).
- <sup>12</sup> Redfern, *On the Trail of the Saucer Spies*, 35.
- <sup>13</sup> Cited in Redfern, *On the Trail of the Saucer Spies*, 36.
- <sup>14</sup> Cited in Redfern, *On the Trail of the Saucer Spies*, 36.
- <sup>15</sup> See Redfern, *On the Trail of the Saucer Spies*, 33.
- <sup>16</sup> The incident is described in Timothy Good, *Alien Base: The Evidence for Extraterrestrial Colonization of Earth* (Avon Books, 1998) 112.
- <sup>17</sup> See Timothy Good, *Alien Base*, 135-40.
- <sup>18</sup> See Redfern, *On the Trail of the Saucer Spies*, 39.
- <sup>19</sup> Hadley Cantril, *The invasion from Mars; a study in the psychology of panic* (Princeton University Press, 1940).
- <sup>20</sup> See SourceWatch, "Psychological Strategy Board," [http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Psychological\\_Strategy\\_Board](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Psychological_Strategy_Board)
- <sup>21</sup> See: Stanton Friedman, *TOP Secret/MAJIC: Operation Majestic-12 and the United States Government's UFO Cover Up* (Marlowe and Co., 2005) 50,55.
- <sup>22</sup> See "Majestic Twelve Project, 1st Annual Report," Robert and Ryan Woods, eds., *Majestic Documents* (Wood and Wood Enterprises, 1998) 114. (p. 10). Also available online at: [http://209.132.68.98/pdf/mj12\\_fifthannualreport.pdf](http://209.132.68.98/pdf/mj12_fifthannualreport.pdf)
- <sup>23</sup> For discussion of how "need to know" was applied to extraterrestrial related information, see Timothy Good, *Need to Know: UFOs, the Military, and Intelligence* (Pegasus Books, 2007).
- <sup>24</sup> "Report of the Meetings of Scientific Advisory Panel on Unidentified Flying Objects Convened by Office of Scientific Intelligence, CIA, Jan 14-18, 1953" (Released November 16, 1978) I. Available online at: <http://www.ufologie.net/htm/durantreport.htm>
- <sup>25</sup> "Report of the Meetings of Scientific Advisory Panel on Unidentified Flying Objects," 15.
- <sup>26</sup> "Report of the Meetings of Scientific Advisory Panel on Unidentified Flying Objects," 19-20.
- <sup>27</sup> Cited in Redfern, *On the Trail of the Saucer Spies*, 39.
- <sup>28</sup> Redfern, *On the Trail of the Saucer Spies*, 38-39.
- <sup>29</sup> For discussion of Pope and the CIA connection to the National Enquirer, see Terry Hansen, *The Missing Times* (Xlibris Corporation, 2001) 231-46.
- <sup>30</sup> Donald Keyhoe, *Aliens from Space* (Signet, 1973) 198.
- <sup>31</sup> Keyhoe, *Aliens from Space*, 198.
- <sup>32</sup> United States Senate, *Final Report of the Select Committee to study Governmental Operations with respect to Intelligence Activities together with additional, supplemental, and separate views*, April 26 (Legislative Day, April 14), 1976. Available online at: <http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/cointelpro/>
- <sup>33</sup> United States Senate, *Final Report of the Select Committee to study Governmental Operations with respect to Intelligence Activities*, Book III., sec. I.
- <sup>34</sup> United States Senate, *Final Report of the Select Committee to study Governmental Operations with respect to Intelligence Activities*, Book III., sec. I.

- 
- <sup>35</sup> United States Senate, *Final Report of the Select Committee to study Governmental Operations with respect to Intelligence Activities*, Book III., sec. I.
- <sup>36</sup> United States Senate, *Final Report of the Select Committee to study Governmental Operations with respect to Intelligence Activities*, Book III., sec. D.1.
- <sup>37</sup> United States Senate, *Final Report of the Select Committee to study Governmental Operations with respect to Intelligence Activities*, Book II, Section 1.C.
- <sup>38</sup> United States Senate, *Final Report of the Select Committee to study Governmental Operations with respect to Intelligence Activities*, Book II, Section 1.C.2.
- <sup>39</sup> United States Senate, *Final Report of the Select Committee to study Governmental Operations with respect to Intelligence Activities*, Book II, Section 1.C.6.
- <sup>40</sup> United States Senate, *Final Report of the Select Committee to study Governmental Operations with respect to Intelligence Activities*, Book II, Section 1.C.6.
- <sup>41</sup> United States Senate, *Final Report of the Select Committee to study Governmental Operations with respect to Intelligence Activities*, Book II, Section 1.C.4.
- <sup>42</sup> United States Senate, *Final Report of the Select Committee to study Governmental Operations with respect to Intelligence Activities*, Book II, Section 1.C.
- <sup>43</sup> Brookings Report, 215. For an overview of the Brookings Report, go to:  
<http://www.enterprisemission.com/brooking.html>
- <sup>44</sup> Brookings Report, 215.
- <sup>45</sup> Brookings Report, 215.
- <sup>46</sup> For description of the lack of resources and inadequate Air Force support for Project Blue Book, see Edward Ruppelt, *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects* (Doubleday, 1956).
- <sup>47</sup> Allen Hynek, *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry* (Henry Regnery, 1972) 30.
- <sup>48</sup> United States Senate, *Final Report of the Select Committee to study Governmental Operations with respect to Intelligence Activities*, Book II, Section 1.C.
- <sup>49</sup> See Ryan Wood, *Majic Eyes Only: Earth's Encounters with Extraterrestrial Technology* (Wood Enterprises, 2005) 264-67; & Stanton Friedman, *TOP Secret/MAJIC*, 161-84.
- <sup>50</sup> "SOM1-01: Majestic-12 Group Special Operations Manual," *The Majestic Documents*, eds. Robert Wood & Ryan Wood (Wood & Wood Enterprises, 1988) [ch. 3.12b.] 165
- <sup>51</sup> Redfern, *On the Trail of the Saucer Spies*, 57.
- <sup>52</sup> See Daniel M. Salter, *Life with a Cosmos Clearance* (Light Technology, 2003) 15-16, 122-23; & Dan Sherman, *Above Black: Project Preserve Destiny – Insider Account of Alien Contact and Government Cover Up* (OneTeam Publishing, 1998).
- <sup>53</sup> See Steven Greer, *Hidden Truth Forbidden Knowledge* (Crossing Point, Inc., 2006) 158-59.