

President Harry S. Truman

Written by Grant Cameron

Friday, 31 July 2009 03:32 - Last Updated Monday, 08 October 2012 20:26

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33rd President

April 12, 1945 - January 20, 1953

"Dave, if I were to tell you what happened at Roswell you would never see the world in the same way again." **Air Advisor to President Truman** **General Robert Landry** **talking to his grandson.**

Yes, we discussed this at every conference that we had with the military. There was always things that that going on. There were flying saucer and other things you know if I am not mistaken. **Harry S Truman**

President Harry Truman is the first President to have to deal with the UFO phenomena publicly. There may have been sightings and/or UFO crashes before Truman, but nothing that had to be dealt with publicly. More importantly, Truman was the first President who had to deal with the public relations problems that go along with the UFO phenomena.

It is estimated that every day in the United States government, 17,000 pages of documents are

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written and classified. In addition thousands of pages of documents are created and published every day by the government which are not classified. The President, no matter how smart, or how fast he reads, has the time to read even the tiniest percentage of these documents.

Add to this the fact that many of Presidents did not like to read large amounts. Truman, for example, when finally briefed on the atomic bomb a couple weeks after he entered office, was presented a 23-page memo from Secretary of War H. Stimson explaining what the atomic bomb was, and how it worked. Truman protested having to read memo stating it was too long.

Right from the start, there was secrecy surrounding the flying saucer subject that seemed to be orchestrated by the government overseen by President Truman. Truman was in fact the President who setup structure of the present intelligence system, and made it a tool for use by future Presidents. In 1946 he set up the Central Intelligence Group, which became the Central Intelligence Agency in 1947. He was the first President in history to get a daily intelligence report (now know as the President Daily Briefing) to bring him up to date on the latest intelligence developments. In 1951, Truman created the Office of Current Intelligence, and in 1952 the National Security Agency.

Once elected Truman set out to reconstruct the intelligence system. He believed that it had been a fragmented array of intelligence agencies run by each department. Each department "walled itself off" from other agencies to protect what it had. It was impossible for the President to get behind each wall and gather up the intelligence that he needed. His plan, still in place today, was to create one Director of Central Intelligence, whose job it was to gather up all the intelligence and report it back to the President.

There is little doubt that in these early years Truman was very aware, and in total control of the UFO situation. At one point he even publicly declared in reply to a flying saucer question from a reporter, " Yes, we discussed this at every conference that we had with the military. There was always things that that going on. There were flying saucer and other things you know if I am not mistaken."

There has always been a controversy as to what President Truman's views were on "flying saucers" or "flying discs" as they were called during the tenure of his administration. Truman was not an elected President, taking over May 2, 1945 after the death of Roosevelt.

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Some UFO researchers who were around at the time felt that President Truman had very negative opinions about flying saucers. One of these is James W. Moseley, who published a magazine in the 1950's called Saucer News. " In our two meetings with Truman," said Moseley, "he definitely expressed negative opinions about flying saucers."

"We had a brief private meeting with Truman in 1954," continued Moseley, "after he was out of office, and the quote he gave us regarding flying saucers was simply 'I've never seen a purple cow, I hope never to see one...He refused to add to that statement. Several years later we attended a Truman press conference (not at the White House), and received similar negative responses from the ex-president in answer to our UFO-related questions."

Inquiries made at the Truman archives tend to agree with Moseley's view that "obviously Truman did not believe that they do exist." The library claims to have no documents at all on UFOs. Taking Truman's statements to Moseley, or the Truman Library's statements at face value would mean that Truman was totally out of the loop on the flying saucers that were being written about in newspapers during his administration.

A closer view of the literature of the late 40's when Truman was President, and a close review of the documents at the Truman Library, show that Truman was very interested and involved in the UFO situation. What he stated in public to Moseley may just have been a put off to avoid getting pulled into a public discussion about UFOs, which has always been a no-win situation.

The idea that President Truman was uninvolved and uninterested in the flying saucer situation became questionable after statements were made by General Robert B. Landry, the Air Force Aide to the President. He described how in February 1948 he was called into the Oval Office where he spoke with the President about to the continued sightings of flying saucers across the country. General Landry had just been appointed. He explained his UFO role during an oral history done for Columbia University:

In this time period the UFO phenomenon was getting quite a bit of play in the press, radio, TV and from miscellaneous other sources. All manner of objects and things were being seen in the sky by people, including attempted UFO landings and UFOs hovering over isolated areas. There was even a report of seeing little men with big round heads getting in and out of a UFO. Well, the President, like any other citizen, is exposed to all these goings on, too.

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I was called in one afternoon to come to the Oval Office. "He the President wanted to see me. We talked about UFO reports and what might be the meaning for all these rather way-out reports of sightings, and the subject in general. The president said he hadn't give much serious thought to all these reports; but at the same time, he said, if there was any evidence of a strategic threat to the national security, the collection and evaluation of UFO data by Central Intelligence warranted more intense study and attention at the highest government level.

President Truman gave General Landry instructions about reporting the flying saucer situation to him. "I was directed to report quarterly to the President after consulting with Central Intelligence people, as to whether or not any UFO incidents received by them could be considered as having any strategic threatening implications at all," stated Landry. "The report was to be made orally by me unless it was considered by intelligence to be so serious or alarming as to warrant a more detailed report in writing. During the four and one-half years in office there, all reports were made orally. Nothing of substance considered credible or threatening to the country was ever received from intelligence."

It is important to note from Landry's 1974 recollections that Truman asked for a briefing every three months, and therefore did have an interest in the flying saucers situation. It counters the many claims that Truman had no interest in the subject. He was in the loop, dealing with the subject on a regular basis.

General Landry's statement also reveals that the President told him already in 1948 "if there was any evidence of a strategic threat to the national security, the collection and evaluation of UFO data by Central Intelligence warranted more intense study and attention at the highest government level." The CIA, whose director was a presidential appointee principal advisor to the President for Intelligence matters related to national security, was busy investigating flying saucers.

Landry was further told to present his oral report to the President after "after consulting with Central Intelligence people." This admission by General Landry is strange and yet important because the CIA has maintained many times that it has never been involved in the investigation of UFOs. Landry points out clearly that the CIA was very busy checking out the saucers.

The CIA was only created in September 1947. The mission they were given was the gathering of foreign intelligence. The Landry revelation, however, shows that only six months after the creation of the agency, they were already spying on Americans, and their reported UFO

sightings, quite contrary to the legal guidelines that had been setup for their agency.

This was only the first of many times the President's CIA people would be caught investigating the domestic UFO situation. Every time they would cut their losses, and make up some bizarre explanation of why they were investigating UFOs. Then, while setting up new covert investigations, they would promise not to do it again.

In 1969 for example, Arthur Lundahl, a key CIA employee who had briefed three Presidents on UFOs, provided a classic explanation of why he told the Air Force sponsored Condon committee to hush-up the help he was providing from the CIA.

"The phenomena," said Lundahl "is a fulminating subject, you see. There are a lot of wild-eyed nuts in this field who sit on mountaintops doing drugs and waiting for the sunrise. There are guys with psychic phenomena pouring out their ears. There are weird people all over. And of course, the CIA is a kind of exciting enough name in itself. And if you mix fire and kerosene together, you get the whole place excited. I wanted to be careful and not imply that we were substantially involved."

Lundahl always had a way with words. As in the above explanation, Lundahl was able to provide an explanation so bizarre that one easily forgot the obvious. In the case of UFOs and the CIA, the simple reason to keep CIA involvement secret was: their involvement was illegal.

The most important fact Landry disclosed about his quarterly UFO reports to President Truman is that they were to be done orally, as to not leave a paper trail. (The longstanding rule of never putting anything in writing that is vital to the survival of the organization). This one disclosure may explain why so little in the way of documentation is found in any of the Presidential Libraries related to direct involvement by the various Presidents who have been forced to deal with the UFO phenomena. Nothing was ever written down.

The oral nature of the flying saucer briefings also indicates that in these early days of the flying saucer mystery authorities realized that a high level of security was necessary. The authorities realized that what they were dealing with was of utmost importance to the national defense of the nation. Further proof of this is found in the fact that briefing given to the President by the Director of Central Intelligence was also done orally.

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This is exactly the reaction that one would expect. Either the crash at Roswell, or some other major event occurring early on, convinced Truman and other high officials that they were dealing with "extraterrestrial" phenomena. The military would have insisted first that absolute secrecy be maintained till they were able to assess and deal with the phenomena. Absolute secrecy would require oral only briefing.

General Landry served as President Truman's Air Force Aide for four and a half years. That means that Landry would have given at least eighteen oral briefing on flying saucers to President Truman during Truman's second administration. The flying saucer phenomena became public in June 1947, which leads to the possibility that Landry's predecessor also provided other briefing to Truman before Landry was appointed.

The Roswell Crash

In early July 1947, an object crashed on the Foster ranch outside of Roswell, New Mexico. On July 8, 1947 The Roswell newspaper ran a story that the Army Air Force has recovered one of the flying disks. The race for the truth and the story was on.

In Fort Worth Texas, Col. Thomas Du Bose, received a call from Washington from General Clemence McMullen. The General was phoning to relay a message to Du Bose's boss, Big. Gen. Roger Ramey, head of the 8th Air Force.

Ramey was to be "told" 1) some of the material from New Mexico was to be put on a plane and sent to Washington. 2) Ramey was to hush up the story by concocting a cover story to "get the press off our backs."

General Ramey also received a phone call from the Truman's Deputy Chief of the Air Force General Hoyt S. Vandenburg that there was material from the crash being held at Roswell Air Force Base.

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A plane half-full of the wreckage recovered by the Army Air Force was placed on a B-29 bomber, and flown to Fort Worth on the way to it's final destination at Wright Patterson Air Force base in Dayton, Ohio. As soon as the B-29 touched down in Fort Worth Brig. General Ramey took over and began a cover-up that would continue for the rest of the century. "Ramey was in complete charge," stated Col. Du Bose, "and the rest of the officers and the men just followed orders."

Colonel William Blanchard, the commander of the 509th Bomb Group at Roswell, phoned Brigadier General Roger Ramey briefing him on the situation with the wreckage. Ramey told Blanchard that he and General Vandenberg were very displeased that there had been a press release from the Roswell base stating that a flying disk had been recovered. Ramey ordered complete secrecy.

Big. Gen. Ramey then went on the local Fort Worth radio station, and announced that the mystery of the wreckage had been solved. It turned out to be nothing more than radar reflector from a rawinsonde weather balloon. He also invited in press people into his office where he showed them what he claimed was the material that had arrived on the plane. The reporters saw the pieces of weather balloon and radar reflectors, and ran the story that the Roswell crash had been a false alarm. The story quickly died, and everyone went on with his or her lives.

Following research that had been done on the crash in the late 70's by Bill Moore and Stanton Friedman many new leads were raised and soon scores of researchers were interviewing old Roswell witnesses about what had actually happened. One of these researchers, George Filer, interviewed the widow of Brig. Gen. Roger Ramey. Mrs. Ramey indicated that President Truman might have had a role in what had gone out regarding the Roswell crash. She was told "her husband had been visited by Truman on several occasions. She indicated they were quite friendly."

This claim was supported by a statement that was made by Air Force Brigadier General Arthur E. Exon who was the commander of Wright Patterson Air Force base from August 1, 1964 through to December 20, 1965. At the time of the Roswell crash, July 1947, Exon was a Lt. Col. at Wright Field where the Roswell wreckage was sent.

"I know that at the time...it went to General Ramey...and he along with the people out at Roswell decided to change the story while they got their act together and got the information into the Pentagon and into the President."

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Exon further indicated that Truman was also a member of a top echelon group formed after the Roswell crash to control access to the wreckage, bodies, and information about the crash. He referred to them as the unholy thirteen. Truman was the only elected official on the committee. "Elected officials," he stated, " were excluded from knowing anything about it."

Not only did General Ramey deal with Truman, Brigadier General Exon was sure that Ramey would have reported to General Dwight Eisenhower who would become the next President. At the time of the Roswell crash Eisenhower was the Army Chief of Staff. Exon thought that Ramey would have followed the chain of command and phoned Eisenhower about the crash.

Truman sent out award letters shortly after the Roswell crash to the Wright Patterson Base Commander. This was reported to Filer by a Wright Patterson base historian.

The phone records at the White House showed no phone calls that could be directly related to the crash, but later research showed that Truman was very active in the Roswell crash recovery. Some of the officers involved in the crash such as Edwin Easley refused to talk stating that they had been sworn to secrecy by President Truman. This made no sense because Truman was in Washington at the time. Later it was discovered that some of these promises to Truman were being done by a secret service agent acting on behalf of the President.

The name that was reported was a man by the name of Gerald McCann. A check of the official records at the Truman Library showed that there was in fact a man by that exactly name you had been a secret service agent with President Truman for his entire administration.

Foo Fighters

Another report of direct Presidential involvement in the flying saucer situation is President Truman's 1949 commissioning of a study into the "Foo Fighters" that plagued both sides during World War 11. The Foo Fighters were meter wide balls of light that paced both the German and Allied planes during the war. Both sides in the war considered the possibility that the objects were secret weapons being used by the other side. The issue of what the objects were was never really resolved during the war.

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General Jimmy Doolittle headed up the study into what the Foo Fighters had been. The study done by General Doolittle concluded that both sides had reported having been paced by the objects. Doolittle reported to the President that the objects had not been secret German or Allied weapons. Finally Doolittle told President Truman that the objects were "most likely of extraterrestrial origin."

Truman sends a Message

"I can assure you that flying saucers, given that they exist, are not constructed by any power on earth."

This was a statement supposedly made by President Truman on April 4, 1950. Some reports have the statement coming at a Washington Press Conference. Unfortunately, Truman was at his Key West, Florida residence on the day in question and did not hold a Press Conference on that day.

Each day of the Presidency, however, his Press Secretary Charles Ross would usually hold two press scrums with reporters to answer questions. As a later "Time Magazine" article more accurately put it, the statement about the President's claimed ignorance of the situation came from his Press Secretary. The April 17, 1950 "Time" article stated, "In April 1950 Truman sends word through his press secretary that he knows nothing about the saucers."

July 1952

During the summer of 1952 there was a large rash of UFO sightings all over the United States. The rash extended to two very public waves of UFOs being tracked from three different locations as they flew right over the White House, the Capitol, and the Pentagon on July 19th and July 26th. The Air Force conducted a major investigation into the appearance of the objects. The UFO sightings were headlined in newspapers all over the country, and in some places replaced the Democratic National Convention on the front page.

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"A massive build-up of sightings over the United States in 1952," wrote Gerald K. Haines in an article for the CIA, "especially in July, alarmed the Truman administration." It led the Truman administration to give the order that the flying saucers be shot down. On July 26, 1952, the Air Force obeyed and gave the order to "Shoot them down!"

"Several prominent scientists, including Albert Einstein, protested the order to the White House and urged that the command be rescinded, not only in the interest of future intergalactic peace, but also in the interest of self-preservation: Extraterrestrials would certainly look upon an attack by the primitive jet firepower as a breach of the universal laws of hospitality."

"The 'shoot them down' order was consequently withdrawn on White House orders by five o'clock that afternoon." That night the saucers were back.

Captain Edward Ruppelt, who had just taken over Project Blue Book was called July 28, 1952 by Brigadier General Landry, at the request of President Truman to brief the General on the Washington sightings and the phenomena itself. Ruppelt described President Truman's concern:

"About 10:00 a.m., the President's air aide, Brigadier General Landry, called intelligence at President Truman's request to find out what was going on. Somehow I got the call. I told General Landry that the radar target could have been caused by weather but we had no proof."

Ruppelt further stated that he learned later that President Truman had been on the phone line listening while Ruppelt gave the briefing to General Landry. The listening in on the UFO briefing by Truman, combined with the fact that the President was being briefed orally every three months by General Landry, clearly showed that Truman took a keen interest in the UFO situation. It is shows that Truman's negative statements about UFOs have to be taken with a grain of salt.

According to skeptical UFO buff Philip Klass the July 1952 unexplained sightings over the White House "prompted inquiries by the White House by the CIA, which, understandably, had triggered its official interest."

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Klass also maintained that agency officials sought Presidential authorization for actions they were about to take to control the UFO problem, due to the fact that the U.S.A.F. had primary responsibility in law for UFOs. "Some agency officials," wrote Klass "had been anxious to have the National Security Council authorize the CIA to initiate a major UFO investigation.

The Robertson Panel

President Truman the head of the National Security Council, after the July UFO over flights of the White House, was eager to have the potential threat of the UFOs analyzed. The security aspect regarding UFOs was the same concern that he had raised with General Landry in 1948.

Plans started to take form for what would become known as the Robertson Panel.

"On December 4, 1952, the Intelligence Advisory Committee recommended that: 'The Director of Central Intelligence will 'enlist the services of selected scientist to review and appraise the available evidence in the light of pertinent scientific theories...'"

Five of the most respected physical researchers in the country were convened at the request of the CIA, under the cover of the Air Force, from January 14 to January 17, 1953. It was only days before the end of President Truman's administration ended. The five chosen scientists were not there to do science, but to evaluate the potential threat of UFOs to the security of the United States. The five men chosen all had Top Secret security clearances.

The members of the panel were Dr. Louis Alvarez, a physics Nobel Prize winner; Lloyd Berkner, a leading space scientist; Sam Goudsmit, director of Brookhaven National Laboratory; Thornton Page, one of the most respected astronomers in the land. And the chairman was Dr. Robertson, world-renowned physicist at Cal Tech, California Institute of Technology.

The five scientists were briefed on a number of cases by the Air Force, who had picked the cases to represent a cross-section of the better UFO cases. After only four days they had already reached their conclusion. The panel officially known as "Scientific Advisory Panel on

Unidentified Flying Objects." They concluded that there was no threat to the National Security of the United States.

They did however find that UFOs constituted a threat "to the orderly function of the protective units of the body politic because an unwarranted mass of irrelevant information could clog vital channels of communication and continued false reports could hide indications of a genuine hostile attack."

In other words an enemy could stage a fake UFO wave of sightings that would clog the communications channels of the military while a real attack was in process. The theory was not as far fetched, as it seemed. The scientists were probably considering whether the U.S. military would have been able to detect an attack during the UFO wave over Washington the past year. They may even have had some material that indicated the communications channels had been overwhelmed in the past.

The entire panel discussion, along with the report was classified secret, and sent to the new President Dwight Eisenhower. It had to remain totally secret, as again the CIA was involved in domestic surveillance of UFO cases, and it was still illegal for the CIA to do it. The fact that there had ever been a review of the UFO situation by the CIA was kept secret until NICAP forced the reports release in 1958.

"When a copy of the Robertson Panel report was transmitted to the Intelligence Advisory Committee on February 18, 1953, committee secretary James Q. Reber wrote 'The results of the panel's studies have moved the CIA to conclude that no National Security Council Intelligence Directive (authorizing the CIA to launch a UFO investigation) on this subject is warranted."

The CIA had already been keeping a close watch on the flying saucer situation. Admiral Hillenkoetter who had been the CIA Director in 1948 stated that the CIA was "keeping a close watch on the UFO problem and the AF operations (investigating sightings.)"

The CIA had even weighed the Presidential situation of its efforts to institute and control the

President Harry S. Truman

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cover-up. This was illustrated by their handling of a spectacular July 2, 1952 Utah film that was under Navy investigation. The Navy analysis of the film had been "unknown objects under intelligent control," and the Secretary of the Navy Kimball was in agreement. The Air Force was confronted with the navy report and tried to delay the release asking the Navy to hold off, until they had done their own analysis. The CIA became aware of the Navy analysis, and how the Air Force was holding the fort with the delay. The CIA planned how the film could be debunked.

The CIA realized that taking on Kimball might backfire. Kimball had sighted a UFO in the spring of 1952, and he would therefore likely be a believer. Kimball might go public with the film, and more damaging with the Navy analysis of the film. Major Donald Keyhoe who became aware of the CIA efforts stated:

"The CIA decided to wait for the November election. General Eisenhower's victory would give them a break - Secretary Kimball would soon be replaced by a Republican, and he would probably not push a fight over censorship with the Air Force."

The plan worked and the Navy Secretary ran out of time before he was replaced. He was left in a situation where all he could do is leave the Navy analysis of the Utah film for the new navy Secretary, and hope that he would do something with it.

The new Secretary, however, did not have a chance. The CIA had decided to end the UFO problem with a massive debunking plan that would kill of the public and media belief in UFOs once and for all. That was the role they gave to the Robertson panel, a group that they had described as a group of scientists gathered together to review the information available on UFOs.

Stories that Didn't Check Out

In the middle of 1948, President Truman along with his top aides and generals made a visit to an Air Force Base in Juneau, Alaska. As the story goes a live alien emerged from a 150-foot craft. "Earth members of the meeting could not understand some of the space people's humble beliefs and actions." "There is nothing to back this story up. There was no Air Force base in Juneau, and President Truman was not in Alaska in 1948."

President Harry S. Truman

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The second story that involved Truman but didn't check out was a story that related to film footage of an alleged alien autopsy released to the public in 1995. There were supposedly fifteen 10-minute reels of silent, black and white motion picture films of an autopsy of an alien creature removed in the Roswell New Mexico area in 1947.

The Truman claim came from Ray Santilli of Merlin productions in Britain. Santilli was the owner of the motion picture film with the alien autopsy on it. Santilli claimed that he had received it from an American cameraman who had taken the film. Santilli claimed that he had done two years of research on the background of the cameraman and the film.

In a telephone call with Stanton Friedman Santilli stated, "There were recognizable people in the film." When asked if he, Santilli, had recognized any of the people - Santilli said "How about President Truman?"

Santilli went on to confirm that Truman was indeed in the film. He further hinted that the autopsy had been done in Dallas when he told Friedman it had been confirmed through research that Truman was in Dallas at the time.

President Truman did not make any trips to Texas or New Mexico between June 1947 and October 1947. Ray Santilli had claimed that there was a trip and that it had been made in connection with a trip Truman had made to Canada. Truman did visit Canada in July, but trips were long individual affairs as the method of travel was slow. It is highly unlikely two trips going in opposite directions would be combined.

The autopsy film was later produced by Robert Kiviat, and shown as a one hour special Alien Autopsy: Fact or Fiction a number of times on the Fox television network. It was also shown on Channel 4 (London).