

UFOs Explainable?



—Times Staff Photo by Doyle Duke.

DR. KAREL HUJER, LEFT, AND DR. ALLEN HYNEK

By NAMAN CROWE

There are still hundreds of reports of unidentified flying objects that simply cannot be explained, Dr. Allen Hynek, consultant to the U.S. Air Force on UFOs for over 20 years, said Saturday.

The Air Force closed out the UFO program in 1969 after concluding that all reports were nothing more than misidentifications.

"I do not agree with that conclusion," Dr. Hynek said. See Page Three, Column Five

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clusion," Dr. Hynek said.

"Of course the great majority of reports have a perfectly normal explanation, anything from drunks to overactive imaginations. But there is a residue of reports that cannot be explained and these are the reports I am continuing to study.

"We have reports from people in highly professional positions such as scientists and astronomers whose word cannot be doubted or ignored," he said.

"Of special note are numerous reports by radar and eyesight received from air traffic controllers."

As far as photographs are concerned, "they are no better than the person who takes the picture, but we have many which we consider to be from reliable sources," Dr. Hynek said.

Dr. Hynek said among the more interesting of the reports are those which can be observed and studied, such as actual imprints left on the earth's surface round impressions seemingly caused from some source of heat, of which more than 300 have been reported.

Dr. Hynek said that because of the Air Force's withdrawal from the study, a more thorough investigation can now be made—if for no other than to simplify matters.

"Instead of having to filter through the thousands of calls accepted from anyone we have now set up a clearing house on UFOs at Northwestern University so we can concentrate mainly on reports from scientific sources.

"Because of the publicity involved in the other approach, people with a professional reputation to uphold would not normally report a sighting for fear of being ridiculed," he said.

"We are getting reports now from scientists, many of whom tell us they made the sightings years ago but chose not to report them because of the very fact that they were scientists."

Asked if any headway had been made in really explaining the UFOs, Dr. Hynek said the sightings are now forming a pattern. Reports from all over the world and from completely different cultures are gradually fitting into place.

"When you have the same report from a native in Africa who has never even seen a piece of paper or an automobile almost match with an astronomer's report from Southern California you get an idea of what to look for."

Dr. Hynek, whose book, "The UFO Experience," is due to be published in the spring, said he is not concerned with "proving that men from Mars are flying around the country in flying saucers."

"We are simply trying to establish the difference between an identified flying object and an unidentified flying object," he said.

"If there is a scientific explanation we hope to find it. If there is not, then at least we can state scientifically that no such explanation exists at the present time for this or that occurrence."

Asked if he believed in life on other planets, Dr. Hynek said "the evidence would certainly support the possibility that the human race is not the only form of intelligence in this universe, if for no other reason than that of statistical probability."

"With billions of suns like our own throughout the galaxies of the universe, it would be cosmically provincial to dismiss the possibility."

Dr. Hynek was in Chattanooga to confer with Dr. Karel Hujer, Guerry Professor of Astronomy and Physics at UTC, for a lecture he is preparing on Johannes Kepler to be given at Northwestern University.

Hujer, who is considered an authority on Kepler, one of the pioneers of Astronomy, has just returned from Russia where he lectured at the Kepler Symposium in Leningrad in celebration of the 400th anniversary of Kepler's birthday.