

# The French Report on UFOs and Defense: A Summary

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On Friday July 16, 1999 an important document was published in France entitled, *UFOs and Defense: What must we be prepared for?* ("Les Ovni Et La Defense: A quoi doit-on se préparer?"). This ninety-page report is the result of an in-depth study of UFOs, covering many aspects of the subject, especially questions of national defense. The study was carried out over several years by an independent group of former "auditors" at the Institute of Advanced Studies for National Defense, or IHEDN, and by qualified experts from various fields. Before its public release, it has been sent to French President Jacques Chirac and to Prime Minister Lionel Jospin.

The report is prefaced by General Bernard Norlain of the Air Force, former Director of IHEDN, and it begins with a preamble by André Lebeau, former President of the National Center for Space Studies (Centre National D'études Spatiales), or CNES, the French equivalent of NASA. The group itself, collective author of the report, is an association of experts, many of whom are or have been auditors of IHEDN, and it is presided over by General Denis Letty of the Air Force, former auditor (FA) of IHEDN.

Its name "COMETA" stands for "Committee for in-depth studies." A non-exhaustive list of members is given at the beginning which is quite impressive. It includes:

- General Bruno Lemoine, of the Air Force (FA of IHEDN)
- Admiral Marc Merlo, (FA of IHEDN)
- Michel Algrin, Doctor in Political Sciences, attorney at law (FA of IHEDN)
- General Pierre Bescond, engineer for armaments (FA of IHEDN)
- Denis Blancher, Chief National Police superintendent at the Ministry of the Interior
- Christian Marchal, chief engineer of the national Corps des Mines and Research Director at the National Office of Aeronautical Research (ONERA)
- General Alain Orszag, Ph.D. in physics, armaments engineer

The committee also expresses its gratitude to outside contributors including Jean-Jacques Vélasco, head of SEPRA at CNES, François Louange, President of Fleximage, specialist in photo analysis, and General Joseph Domange, of the Air Force, general delegate of the Association of Auditors at IHEDN.

General Norlain explains in a short preface how this committee was created. General Letty came to see him in March 1995, when he was Director of IHEDN, to discuss his idea of a committee on UFOs. Norlain assured him of his interest and referred him to the Association of Auditors of IHEDN, which in turn gave him its support. As a result, several members of the committee come from the Association of Auditors of IHEDN, joined by other experts.

It is interesting to recall here that, twenty years ago, it was a report of that same Association which led to the creation of GEPAN, the first unit for UFO study, at CNES.

Most of the committee hold, or have held, important functions in defense, industry, teaching, research, or various central administrations. General Norlain expresses hope that this report will help develop new efforts in France and lead to indispensable international cooperation.

General Letty, as president of COMETA, points to the main theme of the report, which is that the accumulation of well documented observations compels us now to consider all hypotheses as to the origin of UFOs, especially extraterrestrial hypotheses. The committee then presents the contents of the study. The first part consists of the presentation of some remarkable cases from both France and other countries.

In a second part, they describe the present organization of research, in France and abroad, and studies made by scientists worldwide which may provide partial explanations of the UFO phenomenon, in accordance with known laws of physics. The main global explanations are then reviewed, from secret crafts to extraterrestrial manifestations.

In a third part, measures to be taken regarding defense are considered, based on information from both civilian and military pilots. Strategic, political and religious consequences, should the extraterrestrial hypothesis be confirmed, are then discussed.

### **Part I: "Facts and Testimonies"**

Many of the cases selected are well known by most researchers, and need only be mentioned here. They are: Testimonies of French pilots:

- M. Giraud, pilot of Mirage IV (1977)
- Colonel Bosc, fighter pilot (1976)
- Air France flight AF 3532 (Jan 1994)

Aeronautical cases worldwide.

- Lakenheath (U.K., 1956)
- RB-47 (U.S., 1957)
- Teheran (1976)
- Russia (1990)
- San Carlos de Bariloche (Argentina, 1995)

Observations from the ground:

- Tanarive (1954) Observation of a saucer near the ground by a French pilot, J.-P. Fartek (1979)
- Observation at close range over a Russian missile site by several witnesses (1989)

Close encounters in France:

- Valensole (Maurice Masse, 1965)
- Cussac, Cantal (1967)
- Trans-en-Provence (1981)
- Nancy (the "Amaranth" case, 1982)
- Counter-examples of explained phenomena (two cases).

Although the selection is limited, it seems to be sufficient to convince an uninformed but open-minded reader of the reality of UFOs.

### **Part II: "The Present State of Knowledge"**

The second part begins with a survey of the organization of official UFO research in France, from the first instructions given to the gendarmerie in 1974 for the recording of reports, to the creation of GEPAN in 1977, its organization and its results, including collection of more than 3,000 reports from the gendarmerie, cases studies, and statistical analyses.

It then surveys agreements passed by GEPAN and, later, SEPRA, with the air force and the army, the civilian aviation and other organizations, such as civilian and military laboratories, for the analysis of samples and photographs.

Regarding SEPRA's methods and results, we are reminded of some famous cases (Trans-en-Provence, l'Amarante), and emphasis is placed on catalogues of cases, notably of pilots (Weinstein catalogue), and radar/visual reports world wide.

A historical note appears here with a quotation of the famous letter of General Twining, of September 1947, which even then asserted the reality of UFOs.

The following chapter, called "UFOs: Hypotheses and attempts at modeling" ("OVNI: hypothèses, essais de modélisation") discusses some models and hypotheses which are under study in several countries. Partial simulations have already been made for UFO propulsion, based on observations of aspects such as: speed, movements and accelerations, engine failure of nearby vehicles, and paralysis of witnesses. One model is MHD propulsion, already tested successfully in water, and which might be achieved in the atmosphere with superconducting circuits, in a few decades. Other studies are briefly mentioned regarding both atmospheric and space propulsion, such as particle beams, antigravity, or reliance on planetary and stellar impulsion.

It is suggested that the failure vehicle engines may be explained by microwave radiation. In fact, high power hyperfrequency generators are under study in France and other countries. One application is microwave weapons. Particle beams, such as proton beams, which ionize the air and therefore become visible, might explain the observation of truncated luminous beams. Microwaves might explain body paralysis.

In the same chapter global explanatory hypotheses are studied next. Hoaxes are rare and easily detected. Some nonscientific theories are discarded, such as conspiracy and manipulation by very secret, powerful groups. Also rejected are parapsychological phenomena, and collective hallucinations. The hypothesis of secret weapons is also regarded as very improbable, as is "intoxication" or hysteria at the time of the Cold War, along with natural phenomena.

We are then left with various extraterrestrial hypotheses. One version has been developed in France by astronomers Jean-Claude Ribes and Guy Monnet, based on the concept of "space islands" of American physicist O'Neill, and it is compatible with present-day physics.

The organization of UFO research in the United States, Great Britain and Russia is rapidly surveyed. In the United States, the media and the polls show a marked interest and concern of the public, but the official position, especially of the Air Force, is still one of denial, more precisely that there is no threat to national security. Actually, declassified documents, released under FOIA, show another story, one of surveillance of nuclear installations by UFOs, and the continued study of UFOs by the military and intelligence agencies.

The report stresses the importance, in the United States, of private independent associations. It mentions the briefing document *Best Available Evidence* [available from CUFOS—see publications page] sent in 1995 to a thousand personalities worldwide, and the Sturrock workshop in 1997, both sponsored by Lawrence Rockefeller. The *Best Available Evidence* has obviously been welcomed by the authors of the COMETA report.

The committee also notes the public emergence of alleged insiders such as Colonel Philip Corso, and concludes that his testimony might be partially revealing as to the real situation in the U.S., despite its many critics.

The report briefly describes the situation in Great Britain, with a special mention of Nick Pope, and poses the question of the possible existence of secret studies pursued jointly with American services. It mentions as well research in Russia, and the release of some information, notably by the KGB in 1991.

### **Part III: "UFOs and Defense"**

In the third part the report states that if it is true that no hostile action has been proven yet, at least some acts of intimidation have been recorded in France (the Mirage IV case, for instance). Since the extraterrestrial origin of UFOs cannot be ruled out, it is therefore necessary to study the consequences of that hypothesis at the strategic level, but also at the political, religious and media/public information levels.

The first chapter of Part III is devoted to prospective strategies and it begins with fundamental questions. What if UFOs are extraterrestrial? What intentions and what strategy can we deduce from their behavior?

Such questions open a more controversial part of the report. Possible motivations of extraterrestrial visitors are explored here, such as protection of planet Earth against the dangers of nuclear war, suggested for instance by repeated flying over nuclear missile sites. The committee then ponders the possible repercussion on the behavior, official or not, of different nations and focuses on the possibility of secret, privileged contacts which might be "attributed to the United States." The attitude of the U.S. is seen as "most strange" since the 1947 wave and the Roswell event. Since that time, a policy of increasing secrecy seems to have been applied, which might be explained by the protection at all cost of military technological superiority to be acquired from the study of UFOs.

Next, the report tackles the question "What measures must we take now?" At the least, whatever the nature of UFOs, they require "critical vigilance," in particular regarding the risk of "destabilizing manipulations." A kind of "cosmic vigilance" should be applied by the elites, nationally and internationally, in order to prevent any shocking surprise, erroneous interpretation and hostile manipulation.

Nationally, COMETA urges the strengthening of SEPRA, and recommends the creation of a committee at the highest level of government, entrusted with the development of hypotheses, strategy, and preparation of cooperative agreements with European and other foreign countries. A further step would be that European states and the European Union undertake diplomatic action with the United States within the framework of political and strategic alliances.

A key question of the report is "What situations must we be prepared for?" It mentions such scenarios as an extraterrestrial move for official contact; discovery of a UFO/alien base on Earth; invasion (deemed improbable) and localized or massive attack; manipulation or deliberate disinformation aiming at destabilizing other states.

COMETA devotes special attention to "aeronautical implications," with detailed recommendations aimed at various personnel, such as air staffs, controllers, weathermen and engineers. It also makes recommendations at the scientific and technical levels, aimed at developing research with potential benefits for defense and industry. The report further explores the political and religious implications of UFOs, using as a model the perspective of our own exploration of space: How would we do it, how would we handle contacts with less advanced civilizations?

Such an approach is not new to the well-informed readers of the abundant ufological literature, but it has a special value here, being treated seriously at such a level. The implications for the media and public opinion are not neglected, with the problems of disinformation, fear of ridicule, and manipulation by certain groups.

In its conclusion, COMETA claims that the physical reality of UFOs, under control of intelligent beings, is "quasi-certain." Only one hypothesis takes into account the available data: the hypothesis of extraterrestrial visitors. This hypothesis is of course unproven, but has far-reaching consequences. The goals of these alleged visitors remain unknown but must be the subject of speculations and prospective scenarios.

In its final recommendations, COMETA stresses again the need to:

1. Inform all decision-makers and persons in positions of responsibility.
2. Reinforce means of investigation and study at SEPRA.
3. Consider whether UFO detection been taken into account by agencies engaged in surveillance of space.
4. Create a strategic committee at the highest state level.
5. Undertake diplomatic action with the Unites States for cooperation on this most important question.
6. Study measures which might be necessary in case of emergencies.

Finally, this document is accompanied by seven interesting appendices which are worth reading even by seasoned ufologists:

1. Radar detection in France
2. Observations by astronomers
3. Life in the Universe
4. Colonization of space
5. The Roswell case and possible disinformation
6. Antiquity of the UFO phenomenon and elements for a chronology.
7. Reflection on various psychological, sociological and political aspects of the UFO phenomenon.