

D/DI55/108/15

5 July 1995

Copy to:
Hd CS(RM)1

PUBLIC ACCESS TO UFO FILES

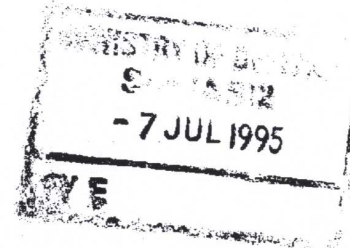
Reference:

A. D/CS(RM)4/6/37 dated 4 Apr 95.

1. For many years various UFO groups have associated DI 55 with reports of Unidentified Flying Objects. Indeed, I have several books at home that describe our supposed role of "defender of the Earth against the alien menace" - it is light years from the truth!

2. I see no reason for continuing to deny that the DIS has an interest in UFOs. However, if the association is formally made public, then the MOD will no doubt be pressured to state what the intelligence role/interest is. This could lead to disbelief and embarrassment since few people are likely to believe the truth that lack of funds and higher priorities have prevented any study of the thousands of reports received.

3. However, on balance, since the link has been made many times, and because I believe that copies of the distribution lists have been published, I see no reason to deny the association any longer. It should, perhaps, be seen as a step towards a more open disclosure of the MOD's interest.



ouch!

Section 40
[Redacted]

Section 40
Wing Commander
DI55c
OWOB 336 Section 40
[Redacted]

Pursue the recommendations.

FILE NOTE



25 Aug 95

Section 40

PUBLIC ACCESS TO "UFO" FILES

Background

- In April we were asked by Hd CS(RM)1 to reconsider the requirement to delete the internal distribution lists from documents contained in our "UFO" files, when they are released into the public domain at the 30 year point. This note represents the combined thoughts of Section 40 and myself.

- My minute at Enc 138 set out the position to DI55c, and Enc 145/1 is DI55c's response. Essentially, the DI55 view is that as the existence of DI55 and the link to this subject has been in the public domain for a number of years (although never formally acknowledged), there would seem little point in denying their role any longer.

- In a subsequent conversation I had with Hd CS(RM)1 earlier this week, he told me that he has recently discovered that a number of "UFO" files which have been released to the Public Records Office have not been sanitized of the internal distribution (presumably by mistake). It would therefore appear that this information is in the public domain already. For us to insist on the continuation of the policy that the internal distribution list be withheld now would appear to the public to be a MOD "U" turn.

- Therefore we need to devise an appropriate line to describe the role of DI55 in connection with "UFO" reporting, once the "UFO fraternity" pick this up.

DI55c's Role and Views

- In his minute at Enc 83 Wg Cdr Section 40 stated that for some years DI55 have been under general remit to advise on "UAPs" but that due to lack of resources they have not been able to study the reports we send over to them, and the reports were merely glanced at and placed on file.

- Wg Cdr Section 40 concluded that it was not possible to advise on the possible threat implications of "UAPs" unless some short study into the subject were conducted to determine whether there is any firm evidence that "UAPs" actually exist and if so whether they indeed pose any threat. He thought that the topic might be worthy of limited study - initially in the form of a review of the data held by DI55 - which would establish whether it was worthwhile devoting resources to conducting a more wide ranging study. In his note he said that it would not be possible to divert any of his officers to the study, but that one way of overcoming this would be to enlist the services of a contractor.

- He sought Sec(AS)'s support for the limited study and at E85 we confirmed that we were content with his proposals. We have heard nothing more about this proposed review of data and as far as I am aware nothing further has been done about it.

Sec(AS)2a Perspective

- From the tone of Wg Cdr **Section 40** note at E83 I do not get the impression that there is any urgency in the requirement, or any conviction that there is a real need for this assessment to be conducted.

- It is important that we use this opportunity to disabuse the "UFO fraternity" of the notion that DI55 receive copies of reports of unusual aerial activity to look exclusively for evidence of extraterrestrial activity which is of defence concern.

Proposal

- Suggest that we should not seek to hold the line on keeping DI55's 'involvement'/'role' out of the public domain; the revelations from CS Records on those files with unexpurgated references already in the public domain precludes this.

- If, however, we are to be open about the role of DI55, we need carefully to construct the description of that role. The "UFO lobby" will doubtless see in all this much to get excited about: cover ups; DI research and sinister implications thereof; a change in the Department's line, and speculation about what might have bought this about etc.

- As to the line; we don't think our current line needs much if any amendment. Reports are looked at by experts within the Department to establish whether what was seen represents anything of defence significance. DI55 [which generally do what?? check with **Section 40**s one such branch.

- On research we need to know what is already in the public domain on this. However, the truth is to our knowledge that no 'research' into the phenomena has been undertaken by MOD - by DI55 or anyone else. What DI55 are planning is to review existing data to determine whether any research is justified. But as this is yet to be established, and represents possible future plans, we are under no obligation to reveal the fact.

- Essentially, we don't do research into the phenomena; we haven't done any; we only would if there were some good reason for doing so - ie. evidence of a threat. It remains that case that no threat has been discerned which has been attributed to an unidentified flying object.