
Special Report

This is the first of two articles.

The MJ-12 Crashed-Saucer Documents

Numerous flaws and inconsistencies reveal that “top secret” papers, including one allegedly found in the National Archives, are fraudulent.

Philip J. Klass

ON MAY 29, 1987, William L. Moore and two associates, Stanton Friedman and Jamie Shandera, released what purport to be “Top Secret” government documents that are either the biggest news story of the past two millennia or one of the biggest cons ever attempted against the public and the news media.

If authentic, the documents show that the U.S. government recovered a crashed flying saucer in mid-1947, and four extraterrestrial-creature bodies, much as Moore claimed in his 1980 book, *The Roswell Incident* (coauthored with Charles Berlitz), and that the government also recovered the remains of another saucer, which crashed on December 6, 1950, near the Texas-Mexico border.

Further, these documents indicate that on September 24, 1947, President Harry S Truman authorized Defense Secretary James Forrestal and Dr. Vannevar Bush, president of the Carnegie Institution, to create a top-secret panel of 12 scientists, military leaders, and intelligence officials—called Operation Majestic-12 (MJ-12). Its function, presumably, was to analyze the crashed saucer to determine its technological secrets and to make recommendations for a suitable U.S. response to extraterrestrial visitors whose intentions might prove to be hostile.

The papers released by Moore, Friedman, and Shandera consisted of

Philip J. Klass, a veteran aerospace editor in Washington, is chairman of CSICOP's UFO Subcommittee and author of UFOs: The Public Deceived and UFOs Explained, among other books. His new book, UFO-Abductions: A Dangerous Game, will be published in early 1988 by Prometheus Books.

three elements, purporting to be the following: (1) a "Top Secret" memorandum from President Truman to Defense Secretary Forrestal, dated September 24, 1947, authorizing him and Dr. Bush to proceed with Operation Majestic-12; (2) a seven-page "Top Secret/Eyes Only" Majestic-12 document used to brief President-Elect Eisenhower, dated November 18, 1952; (3) a "Top Secret" memorandum from Robert Cutler, special assistant to President Eisenhower, to General Nathan Twining, USAF chief of staff, dated July 14, 1954.

According to Moore, the Truman/Forrestal memo and the Eisenhower briefing document were received in mid-December 1984 by Moore's friend Jamie Shandera, a Los Angeles television writer-producer, on an undeveloped roll of 35 mm film.

As Moore described the circumstances in his banquet speech at the 1987 MUFON UFO conference in Washington in late June, the package containing the film was wrapped in plain brown paper "taped with official-looking brown tape on all seams. The address label was carefully typed, with no return address. Inside the [brown] wrapper was a second one, similarly sealed, inside of which was yet another white envelope, inside of which was a canister, inside of which was a roll of *unprocessed* film." (Moore has not replied to my repeated requests that he send me a photocopy of the postmark, showing city and date of mailing.)

If the MJ-12 documents film is authentic, it is odd that it was not sent to Moore, whose book and numerous MUFON conference papers have made him world famous as *the* leading crashed-saucer proponent and researcher—or to Stanton Friedman, who has been Moore's closest collaborator on crashed-saucer research for almost a decade. As Moore explained at the MUFON conference, in recent years he has focused his efforts on trying to establish contacts within the intelligence community "to find out what happened to the wreckage after it came into custody of military authorities."

Why would the film be sent to Shandera, who had never published any papers on UFOs or crashed saucers and does not even consider himself a UFOlogist? How would the sender of the 35 mm film even know that Shandera and Moore were friends and that the contents would find their way to Moore?

Even before the film was developed and the MJ-12 papers became visible, Shandera demonstrated "psychic powers" in "knowing" that the undeveloped roll of 35 mm film in the plain brown wrapper from an unknown sender would be of interest to Moore. This explains why he promptly called Moore even before the film was processed and why Moore was present when it was being developed, according to Moore's report to MUFON.

According to Moore, the person who made the 35 mm film had photographed the MJ-12 documents in two duplicate sequences, seemingly to ensure that there would be at least one good set of imagery. But the sender had not thought to process the film himself for final assurance before sending it to Shandera.

The film's seven-page Eisenhower briefing document indicated that the briefing officer was Admiral Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter, who had been head of

~~TOP SECRET~~
~~TOP SECRET~~
 COPY ONE OF ONE.

SUBJECT: OPERATION MAJESTIC-12 PRELIMINARY BRIEFING FOR PRESIDENT-ELECT EISENHOWER.
DOCUMENT PREPARED 18 NOVEMBER, 1952.
BRIEFING OFFICER: ADM. ROSCOE E. HILLENKOTTER (MJ-1)

NOTE: This document has been prepared as a preliminary briefing only. It should be regarded as introductory to a full operation briefing intended to follow.

.....

OPERATION MAJESTIC-12 is a TOP SECRET Research and Development/Intelligence operation responsible directly and only to the President of the United States. Operations of the project are carried out under control of the Majestic-12 Group which was established by special classified executive order of President Truman on 24 September, 1947, upon recommendation by Dr. Vannevar Bush and Secretary James Forrestal. (See Attachment "A"). Members of the Majestic-12 Group were designated as follows:

Adm. Roscoe E. Hillenkoetter
 Dr. Vannevar Bush
 Secy. James V. Forrestal
 Gen. Nathan F. Twining
 Gen. Hoyt H. Vandenberg
 Dr. Detlev Bronk
 Dr. Jerome Hunsaker
 Mr. Sidney W. Souers
 Mr. Gordon Gray
 Dr. Donald Hensley
 Gen. Robert M. Montague
 Dr. Lloyd V. Berkner

The death of Secretary Forrestal on 22 May, 1949, created a vacancy which remained unfilled until 01 August, 1950, upon which date Gen. Walter B. Smith was designated as permanent replacement.

752-EX-107 (B)

~~TOP SECRET~~
 THE WHITE HOUSE
 WASHINGTON

September 24, 1947.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
 Dear Secretary Forrestal:

As per our recent conversation on this matter, you are hereby authorized to proceed with all due speed and caution upon your undertaking. Hereafter this matter shall be referred to only as Operation Majestic Twelve.

It continues to be my feeling that any future considerations relative to the ultimate disposition of this matter should rest solely with the President following appropriate discussions with yourself, Dr. Bush and the Director of Central Intelligence.

Harry Truman

July 14, 1954

~~TOP SECRET~~
 MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: MJ-12 Special Studies Project

The President has decided that the MJ-12 SEP briefing should take place during the already scheduled White House meeting of July 16, 1954, rather than following it as previously intended. More precise arrangements will be explained to you upon arrival. Please alter your plans accordingly.

Your concurrence in the above change of arrangements is assumed.

ROBERT CUTLER
 Special Assistant
 to the President

240 85703
 11/12/54

COPY

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES
 1335 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
 Washington, D.C. 20540

The "top secret/eyes only" Hillenkoetter briefing document, the "top secret" Cutler memorandum, and the "top secret" Truman memorandum to Defense Secretary Forrestal.

the Central Intelligence Agency in 1947 when MJ-12 allegedly was created and thus would logically be a member. But in the fall of 1950 Hillenkoetter left the CIA to return to sea duty as commander of the Seventh Task Force in Formosan Waters and did not return for duty in the United States until late 1951—the year before the alleged briefing—to become commander of the Third Naval District in New York.

It would have been more logical for Eisenhower to have been briefed by the chairman of MJ-12, who had remained in the United States, close to the committee's activities, since 1947. Presumably this would have been Dr. Bush, who allegedly organized MJ-12 and is shown as one of its original members. (Although the briefing document lists the 12 members of the group, it does not indicate who was chairman but identifies Hillenkoetter as "MJ-1.")

While there are many such substantive anomalies in the contents of the alleged Hillenkoetter/Eisenhower briefing documents, which will be discussed in a subsequent article, the most revealing is the format used to write dates. (I am indebted to Christopher Allan, Stoke-on-Trent, England, who first brought these very significant anomalies to my attention.)

Whoever typed the Hillenkoetter briefing document used a peculiar style for writing dates—an erroneous mixture of civil and military formats. In the traditional civil style, one would write: November 18, 1952. Using the standard military format, one would write: 18 November 1952. But whoever typed the Hillenkoetter briefing document used a military format with an unnecessary comma: "18 November, 1952." *Every date* that appears in this document uses this erroneous military format, with the "unnecessary comma." By a curious coincidence, this is precisely the same style used by William L. Moore in *all* of his many letters to me since 1982, when our correspondence began.

Another curious anomaly in the Hillenkoetter document is the use of a "zero" preceding a single-digit date, a practice that was not used in 1952, when the briefing document allegedly was written, and which has come into limited use only in very recent years. Examination of numerous military and CIA documents written during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s shows the standard format was to write: "1 August 1950." Yet the Hillenkoetter document contains the following: "01 August, 1950" and "07 July, 1947," and "06 December, 1950."

My files of correspondence from Moore show that he used a single digit *without* a zero until the fall of 1983—roughly a year before the Hillenkoetter document film reportedly was sent to Shandera—when he then switched to the same style used in the Hillenkoetter briefing document.

The other document contained on the 35 mm film is what purports to be a "Top Secret/Eyes Only" memorandum, dated September 24, 1947, on White House stationery signed by President Truman. There is no question of the authenticity of the signature, but thanks to invention of the Xerox machine, it is easy to substitute bogus text on a photocopy of an authentic original, obtained, for example, from the Truman Library, in Independence, Missouri, which both Moore and Friedman visited prior to late 1984.

The format of the September 24 memorandum to Defense Secretary Forrestal differs significantly from that used by the president's secretary in other memoranda written to Forrestal, and others, during the same period. The typewriter used for the September 24 document was a relatively inexpensive one with a worn ribbon and keys that had not been recently cleaned, in contrast to the more elegant typeface, fresh-ribbon appearance of authentic Truman memoranda written at about the same time.

Furthermore, Truman was a blunt-spoken man whose letters reflect that style. Yet the second paragraph of the two-paragraph September 24 memo is filled with "un-Truman-like" gobbledygook: "It continues to be my feeling that any future considerations relative to the ultimate disposition of this matter should rest solely with the Office of the President following appropriate discussions with yourself, Dr. Bush and the Director of Central Intelligence." There was no need for Truman to be vague for security reasons, because the September 24 letter is stamped "Top Secret/Eyes Only."

If the letter were authentic, I'm confident it would have read more like the following: "Let's find out where in the hell these craft are coming from, whether they pose a military threat, and what in the hell we can do to defend the country against them if they should attack. I trust you will place all our forces on alert status and inform me if you need additional funds or other resources to protect this nation."

Moore told his MUFON audience that for two and a half years "we sat on the [MJ-12] material and did everything we could with it" to check its authenticity. He noted that all of the persons listed as being members of MJ-12 are now dead. Moore added: "If I was going to pick a panel at that time, capable of dealing with a crashed UFO, I would certainly want to consider [those on] that list." In other words, the members of MJ-12 were persons whom Moore himself would probably have selected for such a committee.

In mid-1982, more than two years before learning of Bush's key role from the MJ-12 papers, Moore demonstrated remarkable psychic abilities in a paper presented at a MUFON conference in Toronto. Moore said that Bush would be "the logical choice for an assignment to set up a Top Secret project dealing with a crashed UFO." Two years later, the MJ-12 papers confirmed Moore's judgment.

In the spring of 1985, Friedman learned that more than a hundred boxes of once Top Secret USAF intelligence documents from 1946 through 1955 were being reviewed by USAF representatives for declassification at the National Archives, in Washington, and he informed Moore of this. In July, Moore and Shandera flew to Washington and were the first persons—according to Moore—to gain access to those more than one hundred cartons of once Top Secret documents.

Lady Luck smiled, enabling Moore and Shandera to discover a sorely needed sheet of paper that could authenticate the MJ-12 documents on the 35 mm film. This key document purports to be a brief, two-paragraph memorandum, dated July 14, 1954, to USAF Chief-of-Staff Twining written

by Robert Cutler, then special assistant to President Eisenhower. The subject of Cutler's memo was "NSC/MJ-12 Special Studies Project," and it informed General Twining that "the President has decided that the MJ-12 SSP briefing should take place during the already scheduled White House meeting of July 16, rather than following it as previously intended."

Moore explained the importance of the July 1985 discovery of the Cutler memo to his MUFON audience in these words: "For the first time we had an official document available through a public source [National Archives] that talked about MJ-12." One might logically have expected that Moore would promptly "go public" with his remarkable MJ-12 papers, which now seemingly were authenticated by the Cutler memo. Yet, curiously, Moore did not do so, *for nearly two years!*

In the April 30, 1987, issue of a newsletter Moore publishes, he first released *three* of the *seven* pages of the Hillenkoetter briefing document, but in *heavily censored* form—*censored by Moore himself*. There was no mention of the Truman memo of September 24, 1947, nor of the Cutler memo of July 14, 1954, nor of the 35 mm film. Instead, Moore implied that the three heavily censored pages of the Hillenkoetter document had been provided by his "well-placed contacts within the American intelligence community" and said that "assurances have been given that additional information can be made available to us over the next several months."

This suggests to me that Moore planned to "dribble out" the MJ-12 material, in his possession since late 1984, in subsequent issues of his newsletter. This could generate more paid subscribers. If this was Moore's plan, it was thrown into disarray in mid-May when British UFOlogist Timothy Good met with the press to promote his new book, which claims a global UFO coverup. Good told British news media about the MJ-12 documents, which he said he had obtained "two months ago from a reliable American source who has close connections with the intelligence community. . . ."

Shortly afterward, Moore went public with the MJ-12 documents, including the Truman and Cutler memoranda, crediting them to the Moore-Shandera-Friedman Research Project. His release said: "Although we are not in a position to endorse its authenticity at this time, it is our considered opinion, based upon research and interviews conducted thus far, that the document and its contents *appear* to be genuine. . . . One document was uncovered at the National Archives which unquestionably verifies the existence of an 'MJ-12' group in 1954 and definitely links both the National Security Council and the president of the United States [Eisenhower] to it. A copy of this document, with its authenticating stamp from the National Archives, is also attached for your examination."

Stanton Friedman, nuclear physicist turned full-time UFO lecturer, who recently has returned to his original field, has been Moore's principal researcher-collaborator on crashed-saucer matters. Moore and Friedman continued to collaborate even after Friedman moved from California to New Brunswick, Canada, in 1980, as evidenced by their jointly authored paper on

Exhibit "A." At top are Hillenkoetter MJ-12 documents. Below these are examples of authentic Military/CIA-document format of the 1950s.

On 06 December, 1950, a
orphan, impacted the
Guerrero area of the

On 07 July, 1947, a
recovery of the wreck
During the course of

until 01 August, 1950, upon
designated as permanent

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

SECRET
SECURITY INFORMATION

DATE: 4 April 1958

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Intelligence

DATE: 9 December 1952

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

Exhibit "B." At top are Hillenkoetter MJ-12 documents. Below are authentic Military/CIA documents showing correct date format, without comma following the month.

Hillenkoetter MJ-12 documents:

FT-KLEOF WRIGHT D. III
18 NOVEMBER 1952

led by Dr. Bronck. It was the
group (30 November, 1947) the
human-like in appearance, the
most responsible for that

DOCUMENT PREPARED 18 NOVEMBER, 1952.

REPORTING OFFICER, SGT. ROBERT W. WITTE

ANALYSIS OF FLYING OBJECT INCIDENTS IN THE U. S.

*AFR 200-2
1-4

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON
18 AUGUST 1964

Air Intelligence Division Form No. 203
10 December 1948

INTELLIGENCE

Objects Reporting (Short Title: UFOs)

Directorate of Intelligence and Office of Naval Intelligence

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
Office of Public Information
19 June 1952

Exhibit "C." William L. Moore letters showing same incorrect "mixed military-civil format as that used in the Hillenkoetter MJ-12 briefing paper.

File Class
04 "H" St. SV
© 20024

18 May, 1984

WILLIAM L. MOORE PUBLICATIONS & RESEARCH
4219 WEST OLIVE ST., SUITE #9 247, BURBANK, CA. 91505

WILLIAM L. MOORE
WAYNE W. "DAVID" DUKE
PHONE: (818) 506-8365

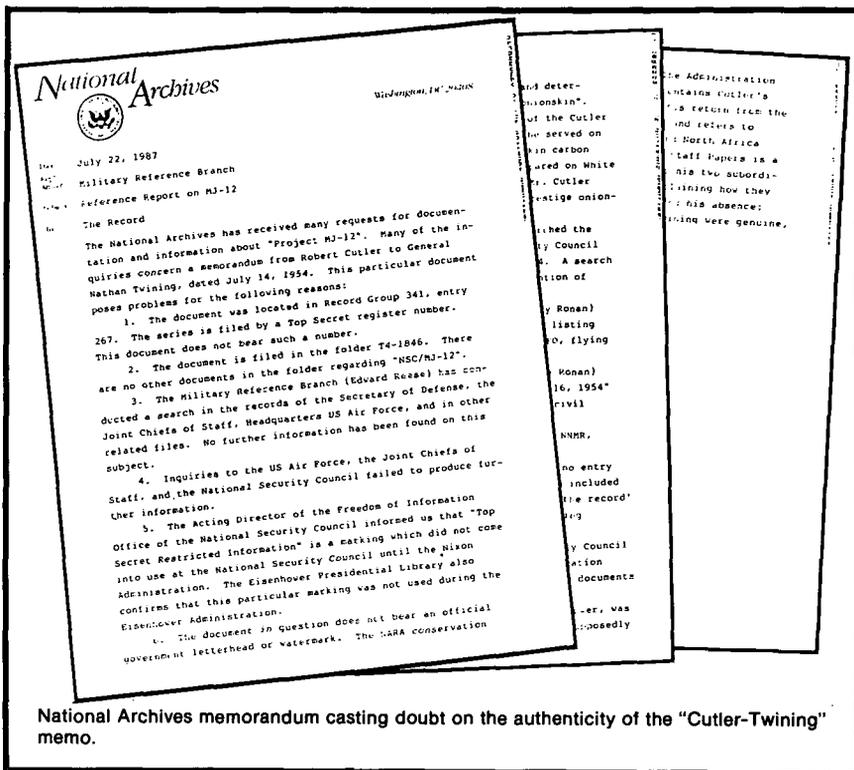
Date 17 June, 1985

WILLIAM L. MOORE
WAYNE W. "DAVID" DUKE
PHONE: (818) 506-8365

Date 06 June, 1985

Class
1* SV
124

WILLIAM L. MOORE PUBLICATIONS & RESEARCH
4219 WEST OLIVE ST., SUITE # 247,
BURBANK, CALIFORNIA, 91505



crashed-saucers presented at the 1981 MUFON conference in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Thus one would think that, immediately after discovering the MJ-12 papers on the 35 mm film in late 1984, Moore would have sent a copy to Friedman. Yet it was not until late May 1987 that Friedman obtained a set of the documents, according to Friedman. In view of Moore's claim that he and Shandera spent more than two years trying to verify the authenticity of the MJ-12 papers, one would have expected that Moore would promptly have sent the MJ-12 papers to Friedman to enlist his help in trying to authenticate them.

Friedman told me that Moore first informed him by telephone of the MJ-12 papers in late 1984 or early 1985. But, as Friedman explained in a recent letter, at that time one of his sons was fatally ill and Friedman was preoccupied with buying a new house and preparing to leave for a long UFO lecture tour. So it did not occur to Friedman to ask that Moore send him a copy of the MJ-12 papers, nor did he request a copy during the subsequent two years. That Moore did not send Friedman a copy on his own seems a most curious oversight since the documents, if authentic, were world-shaking in their importance. It is especially odd in view of Timothy Good's claim that his unidentified American source had supplied him with a copy of the MJ-12 papers earlier than Moore supplied a copy to Friedman, his closest collabora-

tor on the case. (Moore has not responded to my repeated queries as to whether he was the American source who supplied Good with the MJ-12 papers.)

On July 22, 1987, Jo Ann Williamson, chief of the military reference branch of the National Archives, wrote a three-page memorandum summarizing the results of its own investigation into the Cutler/Twining memo, which played a key role in "authenticating" the MJ-12 papers. The National Archives memo pointed out that every other Top Secret document in the boxes of material in which the Cutler/Twining memo allegedly was found was stamped with an individual "register number"—a protocol used by the USAF reviewers to assure that each is properly accounted for and none is mislaid. The National Archives memo notes that the Cutler/Twining memo "does not bear such a number."

The Cutler/Twining memo purported to be a carbon copy on onionskin paper—which understandably would not carry the White House logo and would not necessarily be signed or initialed by Cutler. But the National Archives memo noted that "the Eisenhower Library has examined its collection of the Cutler papers. All documents created by Mr. Cutler while he served on the NSC staff have an eagle watermark in the onionskin paper." The Cutler/Twining memo found by Moore and Shandera did *not* have such a watermark. Furthermore, typewriter-key impressions protruded from the backside, suggesting it was an "original" and not a carbon copy as it appeared to be.

The National Archives memo quoted Eisenhower Library officials as stating that even when President Eisenhower had "off-the-record" meetings,

CSICOP Statement On Institutional Responsibility for Noncredit Courses

The Executive Council of CSICOP has been asked to express its attitude toward the many courses on parapsychology and other paranormal topics offered by academic institutions.

CSICOP is committed to free inquiry and academic freedom and is opposed to any effort to deny the right to teach or to censor free speech. However, we believe in maintaining high standards of excellence in academic subjects and believe that competent academic bodies should determine the content of the curricula in their respective institutions.

We believe that academic institutions have a responsibility to the general public to ensure that there is a proper procedure for the approval of the content of such courses and that the persons teaching these courses have the appropriate training and qualifications.

CSICOP Executive Council
November 1987

his appointment books “contain entries indicating the time of the meeting and the participants. . . .” But “President Eisenhower’s Appointment Books contain no entry for a special meeting on July 16, 1954, which might have included a briefing on MJ-12.”

More significant, Robert Cutler could not possibly have written the memo on July 14, 1954, telling of last-minute changes in the president’s schedule, *because Cutler had left Washington 11 days earlier (July 3)* to visit major military facilities in North Africa and Europe and did not return to Washington until July 15. This is shown by his subsequent trip report to the president, dated July 20, housed in the Eisenhower Library.

On August 20, 1987, the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal issued a four-page press release that characterized the MJ-12 papers as “clumsy counterfeits.” It cited some of the discrepancies discussed above and attached a copy of the National Archives memo of July 22, 1987.

Several weeks later, the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies responded with a press release that said the question of the authenticity of the MJ-12 documents “is still open.” CUFOS quoted Moore as saying that CSICOP “failed to raise a single issue which cannot be explained by further examination of the evidence.” Moore charged that CSICOP’s appraisal was “not only premature, but unscientific and emotional.”

Shortly afterward, Citizens Against UFO Secrecy, a group that often accuses the government of a UFO-coverup, distributed the September issue of its newsletter *Just Cause*. The entire issue was devoted to the MJ-12 papers. Editor Barry Greenwood said that he remains open-minded to the possibility that a flying saucer crashed in New Mexico in 1947. But, based on his own investigation into the MJ-12 papers, Greenwood characterized them as “a grand deception and, consequently, a giant black eye on the face of UFOlogy. . . . The deeper we looked, the worse it became.” •

Editor’s Note: The next issue of the SKEPTICAL INQUIRER will examine numerous anomalies in the “Hillenkoetter briefing papers,” the reaction of the news media and the leaders of the UFO movement to the MJ-12 papers, and the most important evidence—which a hoaxer could never hope to fabricate.