

Roswell, the CIA and Dr Edgar Mitchell

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In response to an inquiry made by one of the twelve NASA astronauts to have walked on the Moon, the CIA prevented a future CIA Deputy Director from revealing the truth about the so-called 'Roswell Incident'.

The truth about the supposed crash of an extraterrestrial spacecraft was withheld for another 19 years and, as a result, Apollo 14 pilot Dr Edgar Mitchell spent the rest of his life insisting that the US Government was mounting a sustained cover-up about its secret contact with aliens. He was encouraged in that belief by US Government officials who fed him further disinformation.

In 1976, US Admiral Bobby Ray Inman approached the CIA on behalf of Dr Mitchell. Today Admiral Inman says that he was told 'my authority was not sufficient to release the information'.

Admiral Inman's disclosures raise questions about apparent CIA involvement in the 'Roswell Incident' – an involvement that has never been made public.

The information that Inman wanted to disclose to Dr. Mitchell was the accidental crash of a balloon launched in 1947 as part of 'Project Mogul', an exercise to learn more about nuclear weapons tests being conducted in the Soviet Union. The secret monitoring worked by measuring long-distance sound waves originating from nuclear explosions and propagated across the upper atmosphere.¹

In the 1970s, the 'official story' of Roswell was still that an ordinary weather balloon had crash-landed in 1947. Crucially, the CIA did not instruct Admiral Inman to stick to this well-established cover-story, instead refusing to allow him to say anything at all. This deliberate omission allowed astronaut Edgar Mitchell to believe that an extraterrestrial spacecraft really had crashed near the New Mexico township.

In 2008, Dr Mitchell revealed to viewers of CNN's 'Larry King Live' programme that his growing belief in a UFO cover-up at Roswell had driven him to seek an audience at the Pentagon:

'Well, I eventually went to the Pentagon and asked for a meeting with

¹ Or would have worked, had the Soviet Union been conducting nuclear tests prior to August 1949. But by then, the Mogul project had already ended.

the Intelligence Committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff which I got with another naval officer who had had many similar experience and we told our story and this gentleman, a vice admiral, said to us, well, I don't know about that but I'm going to find out. And called a few weeks later and said he had found the source of the black budget funding for this project and that he was going to subsequently investigate because if it was real he should know about it, as a matter of fact, he should be in charge, those were his words.

And so we did get calls from some time later and a report much later than that that he had found the people responsible for the cover-up and for the people who were in the know and were told, I'm sorry, admiral, you do not have need to know here and so, goodbye.'²

The Vice-Admiral referred to by Dr Mitchell was identified as Inman by inquiries made during the research for the current work, which also established that the meeting at the Pentagon took place in 1976.

Inman was promoted to Admiral in 1977, and served as Director of the National Security Agency under President Jimmy Carter. He was appointed CIA Deputy Director by President Ronald Reagan in 1981. Now 87 years old and leading a very active retirement, Admiral Inman explained ³ what had happened after the 1976 meeting with Dr Mitchell. He said:

'I got into some difficulties with the CIA, who said that I was unofficially releasing information without their authorisation. . . I have a history of difficulties with these people. It's not the only time when the CIA has chastised me over the course of my career. For example, after 9/11 I did an op-ed for the *New York Times* about the need to improve intelligence gathering, and was told I should have put it to the CIA for approval before publishing.'⁴

Admiral Inman explained the 1947 Mogul project that led to the infamous 'Roswell Incident':

'There was enormous interest in what the USSR was producing with

² Larry King et al. 'Roswell Truth Debated': CNN transcript of 'Larry King Live', broadcast 4 July 2008. <<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0807/04/lkl.01.html>> (Archived by WebCite® at <<http://www.webcitation.org/75BL75D3N>>).

³ Telephone interview with author, conducted 17 December 2018. Admiral Inman prefaced the conversation with the comment: 'When we've finished this call, you will perhaps understand why I decided I would rather talk by phone than by writing.'

⁴ Bobby Ray Inman, 'Spying for a Long, Hot War', *New York Times* at <<https://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/09/opinion/spying-for-a-long-hot-war.html>> (Archived by WebCite® at <http://www.webcitation.org/75UnF4uxm>)

their atomic bomb tests. This was before [the] U2 [spyplane] and someone came up with the idea of a high altitude balloon because you can still tell a great deal about nuclear explosions from what's carried in on the wind.

They wanted to test the balloon idea and they did, and it crashed in Roswell, New Mexico. And they scooped it up straight away and took it to Site 51⁵ which was the CIA's base ⁶ and the most convenient place to hide it.⁷ Once the U2 was up and running in the 1950s we were already more successful in finding out what the Russian tests were like. The point of the cover-up was to prevent the USSR from knowing that we were monitoring their nuclear tests.'

Admiral Inman could not be drawn on specifics of the 1976 meeting with Dr Mitchell, but made it very clear that the Roswell information he sought to release belonged to the CIA rather than the US Air Force:

'I do recall talking about releasing information [after meeting Dr Mitchell] and the CIA were very cross with me. I was told that I had no authority to unilaterally release details of the balloon project.'

Admiral Inman said that Dr Mitchell had misunderstood or misremembered the outcome of that meeting and that, rather than Inman having 'no need to know', what he had actually told Dr Mitchell was: 'My authority was not

⁵ Sic. There is no record of the facility popularly known as 'Area 51' ever having been referred to as 'Site 51'. Admiral Inman appears to be disclosing the existence of a base that existed in that geographical proximity prior to 1955, when Area 51 was established. The only known candidate for a structure called 'Site 51' in 1947 would have been the deserted Indian Springs Auxiliary Air Field. Today thoroughly modernised and known as Creech AFB, Indian Springs had been abandoned in March 1946 and was not re-opened until January 1948. If the CIA occupied this obscure and isolated airfield during that interval, the purpose of their doing so is not known

⁶ Sic. While the CIA was not put on a statutory footing until the US National Security Act of 1947 was passed (a few weeks after the 'Roswell Incident'), it existed in pre-statutory form as the Central Intelligence Group (CIG). CIG had been created by President Truman shortly after his 1945 abolition of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). The 1947 Act also created the US Air Force and it would be bizarre to suggest that the USA had fought in the Second World War without aerial capabilities. On the very first day of its existence (24 January 1946) the CIG was referred to in writing as 'the Central Intelligence Agency', by Fleet Admiral William D Leahy, who was Truman's chief military advisor. Admiral Inman's reference to a pre-statutory CIA seems to be an acknowledgement of that continuity. See Warner, Michael, 'The Creation of the Central Intelligence Group' in *Studies in Intelligence* (internal publication of the US Central Intelligence Agency) at <<https://tinyurl.com/ybagmz6e>> or <<https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kent-csi/vol39no5/pdf/v39i5a13p.pdf>>. (Archived by WebCite® at <<http://www.webcitation.org/75ELYqm9n>>.)

⁷ The Mogul balloons had been launched from Alamogordo. Admiral Inman is referring to the proximity of the crash site.

sufficient to release the information.'

Until now, the CIA has never been implicated in the events that took place at Roswell in 1947. Officially, the tightly-compartmentalised Mogul project was carried out by a research team at New York University, a situation that recalls other instances of academics being co-opted by the CIA. University researchers later stated that they recognised in 1947 that they had 'no need to know' the purpose of the balloon trials. But two of the key New York University researchers involved in the experiment are now known to have had ties to the CIA. Professor Charles B Moore had active CIA security clearance at the time.⁸ Balloon Project leader and New York University research director Professor Athelstan Spilhaus went on to work as a CIA analyst during the 1960s.⁹

Finally, and conclusively, Admiral Inman's 1976 approach to the CIA about releasing Roswell information demonstrates that he had established some degree of CIA 'ownership' relating to Project Mogul. Why this 'ownership' has remained secret for more than 70 years (not even revealed in the USAF's 'Roswell Report' of 1995),¹⁰ is unknown.

From the point of view of the people behind the UFO disinformation, Dr Mitchell would have been an ideal unwitting spokesman. He was brought up in the vicinity of Roswell, New Mexico, during the 1930s. In July 1945, he witnessed an enormous and brilliant flash of light in the middle of the night, and eventually learned that he was one of the few civilians to have witnessed the top-secret Trinity Test at nearby Alamogordo. Aged 16, Edgar Mitchell was one of the thousands of people who read the *Roswell Daily Record's* 8 July 1947 report that a flying saucer had crashed nearby. From an early age, he was receptive to claims about government cover-ups and about extraterrestrials. There is a certain twisted poetry in the way that the 1947 'Roswell Incident' was used against the lunar pioneer, decades later.

Dr Edgar Mitchell died in February 2016, but was convinced until his dying day that an alien spacecraft had crashed at Roswell. When Wikileaks published the private emails of Democratic Party staffer John Podesta in November 2016, it transpired that Dr Mitchell had been emailing Mr Podesta with some extraordinary ideas. These included claims that extraterrestrials

⁸ *The Roswell Report: Fact Versus Fiction in the New Mexico Desert* (United States Govt Printing Office, 1995) An interview with Moore is attachment 23 of part 2 of the report at <<https://issuu.com/navyufo.org/docs/pt02a>>.

⁹ Obituary of Professor Athelstan F Spilhaus at Legacy.com (from the *Washington Post*) at <<https://tinyurl.com/y9qqv58o>> or <<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/washingtonpost/obituary.aspx?n=athlestan-spilhaus-fred&pid=188927057>>. (Archived by WebCite® at <<http://www.webcitation.org/75FZNZRYB>>).

¹⁰ See note 8.

from a parallel universe were trying to reveal an unimaginably powerful energy source to the human race and would intervene to prevent the US from putting weapons satellites in orbit:

'Remember, our nonviolent ETI from the contiguous universe are helping us bring zero point energy to Earth. They will not tolerate any forms of military violence on Earth or in space.'¹¹

Prior to those emails, Dr Mitchell had spoken more than once about his total certainty that the American Government was maintaining a huge cover-up about its contact with extraterrestrials. In his 1996 book *The Way of the Explorer*, Dr Mitchell wrote:

'I've had no personal encounters with UFOs, though I wish I had, so that I could speak from firsthand experience. I have, however, met with credible professionals within two governments who have testified to their own firsthand experiences with "close encounters" during their official duties. A wealth of classified information on the subject resides in military and intelligence files, which, in my opinion, should be released to the public'.¹²

During a 1996 interview with NBC journalist Dennis Murphy, broadcast to accompany the publication of *The Way of the Explorer*, Dr Mitchell explained that oblique description a little further (although he refused to let his exact words be broadcast):

'Mitchell wouldn't name names. but he says some of his information comes from former highly classified US government employees, people who say our government picked up sonic engineering secrets from UFOs. The Department of Defense declined to comment on Mitchell's allegations, but gave us the US Air Forces standard handout on unidentified flying objects, stating: "there has been no evidence indicating that sightings categorized as 'unidentified' are extraterrestrial." '¹³

On other occasions he made even more startling claims. In an interview in

¹¹ Email from Dr Edgar Mitchell to John Podesta, dated 18 August 2015. Subject 're Space Treaty'. At <<https://wikileaks.org/podesta-emails/emailid/1802>>. (Archived by WebCite® at <<http://www.webcitation.org/75BMBHjH1>>).

¹² Dr Edgar Mitchell, *The Way of the Explorer: An Apollo Astronaut's Journey Through the Material and Mystical Worlds* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1996) p. 212. This can be read at <<http://epizodsspace.airbase.ru/bibl/inostr-yazyki/edgar-mitchell.pdf>>.

¹³ Maria Shriver (interviewer) et al. Edgar Mitchell interview, NBC 'Dateline', broadcast 19 April 1996. Transcript at <<http://www.v-j-enterprises.com/dvmtchl1.html>>. (Archived by WebCite® at <<http://www.webcitation.org/75BODo0qz>>.)

2015 he said:

'I have spoken to many Air Force officers who worked at these [missile] silos during the Cold War. . . They told me UFOs were frequently seen overhead and often disabled their missiles. Other officers from bases on the Pacific coast told me their [test] missiles were frequently shot down by alien spacecraft.'¹⁴

The CIA's 1976 refusal to allow Admiral Inman to tell Dr Mitchell the truth about the Roswell Incident was, then, just part of a larger operation. The Apollo 14 pilot was effectively turned into an unwitting amplifier for the dissemination of the CIA's 'UFO Legend', giving it a major boost due to Dr Mitchell's public prominence and historic stature. Dr Mitchell has gone down in UFO lore as a whistleblower, but the truth is that he was duped into repeating lies and nonsense. In 1976, the CIA helped turn an American hero into an international laughing-stock, and did so with the justification that they were protecting national security.

The CIA has been approached for comment on this story.

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¹⁴ Jasper Hamill, ' "Peace-loving aliens tried to save America from nuclear war," claims moon 14 mission astronaut Edgar Mitchell', *The Mirror* (UK newspaper) at <<https://tinyurl.com/yadjtuj9>> or <<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/technology-science/science/peace-loving-aliens-tried-save-6235113>>.

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