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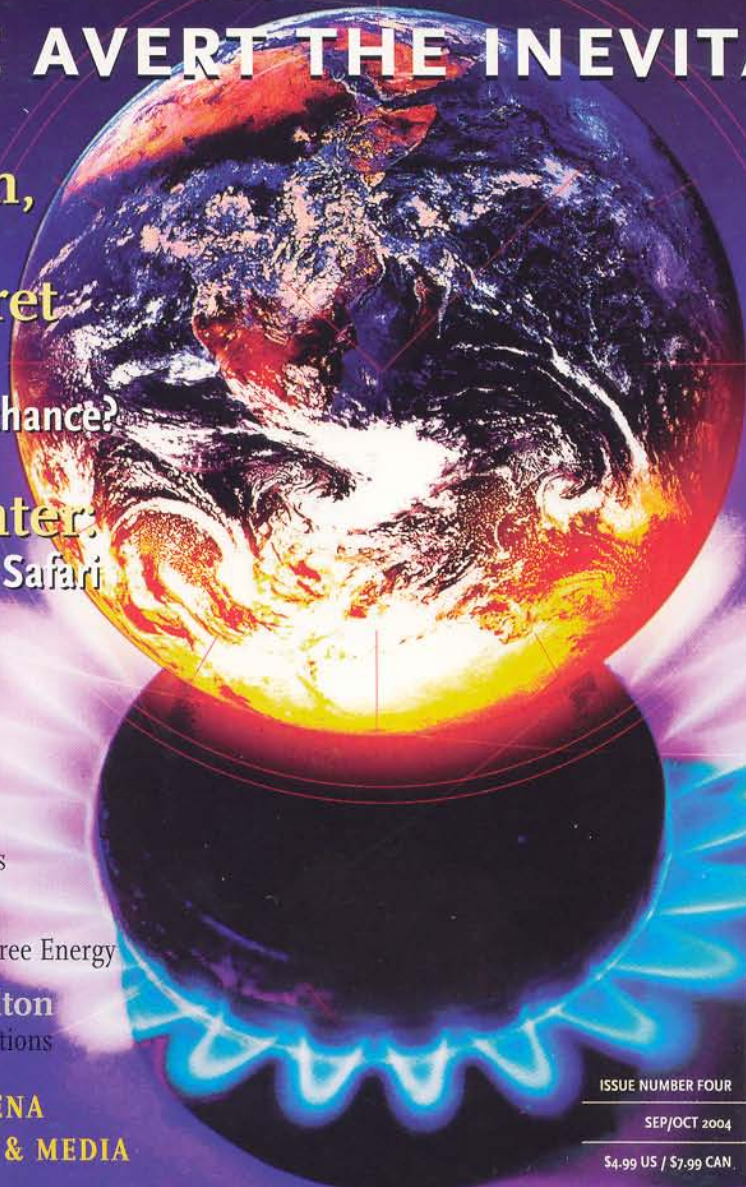
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*Our global civilization is perched at the brink of collapse.*

*How does the existence of an alien intelligence fit in?*

*What might be their perspectives and interests in human civilization's impending spectacular flame-out?*

# THE GREATEST SHOW IN THE QUADRANT: HUMANITY'S IMPENDING FLAME-OUT

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*Is there anything we can do?*

BY RICHARD M. DOLAN

## THE BAD DREAM

ACROSS THE UNITED STATES, wherever you go, people know something is wrong.

It's like a bad dream. You're driving an old, rickety automobile down a rainy, winding mountain road in the dead of night. The car is moving too fast, but you're in a hurry so you keep going. As you drive, the car responds less and less to your actions. Suddenly, a sharp turn comes up ahead. As you try to make the turn, you come to a terrifying realization: you're not driving the vehicle. In fact, you never were.

In a bad dream, this is where you would wake up. Except that we're not dreaming.

We have big problems. A lousy economy for working people, corporate takeovers, spreading poverty, massive and growing cultural divides, international lawlessness, wars everywhere, and a global nastiness worse even than in the days of the cold war.

Then there's the environment. Ozone hole growing, Earth warming, huge chunks of ice falling off Antarctica, frenzied ecosystem destruction worldwide, species disappearing at record rates.

There is a growing sense, vaguely felt, that things are slipping away from our grasp.

### WHAT WE ARE

America has never been merely a nation, but the embodiment of a concept: that people can govern themselves.

But while many people sense that something is wrong with the Land of the Free, most of us are too busy stumbling through our lives, paying our bills, and losing ourselves in the diversions of an out of control consumer society. So we miss the basic problem. It's not the wars, or the economy, or the terrorists, or the environment, although these are certainly serious.

It's that we no longer govern ourselves.

It wasn't always so. We once could believe in progress. As generations passed, America witnessed the ending of slavery, the expansion of voting rights, the improvement of civil and labor rights. Each of these citizen victories was bought dearly, but

they were victories nonetheless.

Today, we are moving backwards. Rights for working people are eroding. People work longer hours. The wealth gap has returned to 1920s levels, in which the wealthiest 1% of the population owned more than 40% of the nation's private wealth. Public resources are being purchased by private corporations. The loss of the "public realm" is one of our great, current, untold stories. Nothing is immune from purchase: water, utilities, public lands, schools, prisons, police, militaries. Call it The Great Silent Firesale.

How can we govern ourselves when the decisions affecting our lives are more likely to be made in a corporate boardroom than in Congress? When our elected officials are little more than hired hands for powerful private interests? When their decisions are made not on the basis of the public good but private profit? When the dominant media organizations – supposedly the public watchdog – are owned by the same crowd and hence part of the problem?

We have outmoded ideas about the nature of authoritarianism. We think of Hitler and Stalin, the Ayatollah and Saddam. Of single party political systems and leader cults. These are crude versions of what has evolved in America. No *coup d'etat* has overthrown our political system. Our politics remain cantankerous. Our political system seems so entrenched as to appear immobile.

But 500 years ago, Niccolo Machiavelli explained how to create a revolution without the public noticing. The secret is to "retain the semblance of the old forms" so that nothing looks different, even though in fact everything is different.

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Such is the case with America. Instead of seeing it for what it is – as a corpse of a republic – we see only the dead man’s clothing, which looks the same as always. America’s quiet revolution has not eliminated its Congressional representatives – it has simply made them irrelevant.

But, as bad it is to realize that you no longer live in the kind of society you grew up believing in, there is something even worse.

This is a bad time to lose control of our vehicle, as we are close to the cliff’s edge. We have the distinct possibility of experiencing a crisis to human civilization that will put all other problems deeply in the shade.

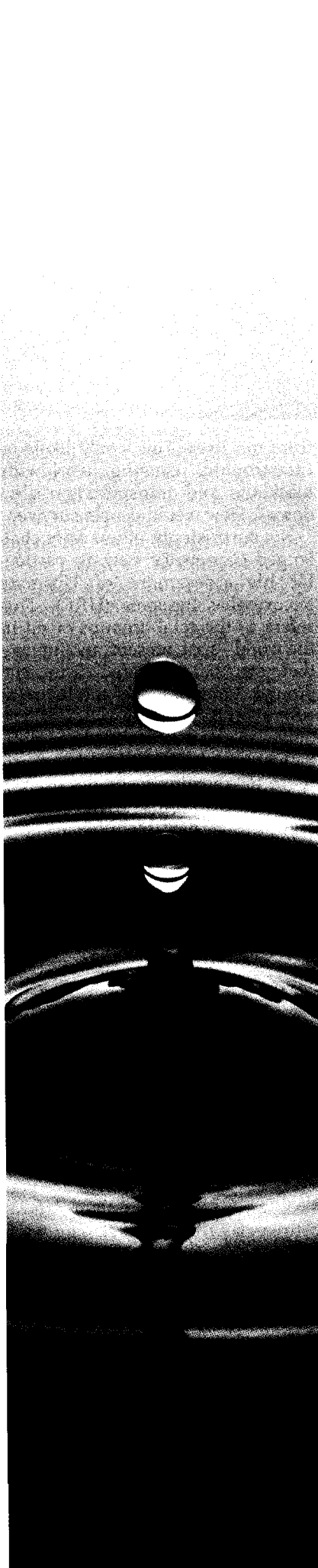
I mean a collapsed industrial infrastructure. The kind of collapse that could have us frantically digging up tree roots to survive. I sincerely hope I am wrong, but a detached review of our situation points to several possible culprits that may end the party that is world civilization.

## WATER

Our planet is dominated by beautiful blue water. Unfortunately, only 3 percent of it is fresh, and most of that is locked away in icebergs or too deeply recessed under the ground for our use. Until recently, however, it was enough for our needs. Global industrialization, massive population growth, and vastly increased agricultural irrigation (for which three-quarters of the world’s fresh water supply is used) have changed all that. Today, nearly 40 percent of the world’s people live in areas with serious water shortages, according to the World Resources Institute, and the problem is just beginning.

For one, we are pumping more groundwater than nature can replenish. Water tables are falling by hundreds of feet in some places. China, India, Thailand, North Africa, the Middle East, Mexico, and the United States are all experiencing a frightening depletion of underground water tables. Crop growing regions are being threatened.

Some American cities, like Tucson, Arizona, are literally sinking because



of ground water depletion. That city faces the incredible prospect of a 10-foot drop in the next twenty years. But this is a problem not only for the dry southwest. In Florida, where more than 50 inches of rain fall per year, there is the shocking prospect of a major water shortage, caused largely by that state’s ill-advised development policies, buried toxins, and endless quest for the perfect lawn.

Half the world’s rivers and lakes are seriously polluted. Saltwater contamination in freshwater supplies is spreading. Many major rivers, like the Yellow, Ganges, and Colorado, no longer reach their destinations. The Aral Sea in Central Asia, once the fourth largest body of fresh water in the world, has lost more than 75 percent of its volume since the 1960s, and half of its water area.

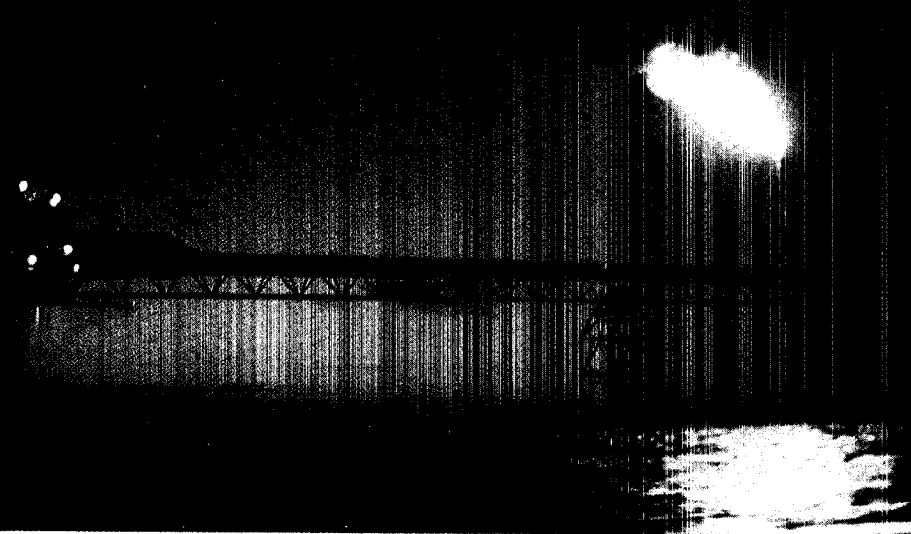
The problem is worsening. The UN estimates that by the year 2025, the world will need twenty percent *more* water than it uses today, in order to feed the additional three billion people whom it expects to be alive. How will we obtain this supply?

## ENERGY

Our world runs on oil. No one knows exactly when we will hit the petroleum wall, but there are genuine reasons to believe (a) it will happen, and (b) it could be sooner than most of us think, and sooner than we can prepare.

From 1945 to 1973, production of world oil skyrocketed. It was abundant and cheap, and fueled astonishing economic growth rates. Oil production per capita grew at the historic rate of 3.45 percent per year. In other words, it easily outstripped population growth.

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Then, in 1973, OPEC curtailed its oil production, causing the first great oil crisis. For the rest of the 1970s, growth in world oil production per capita slowed to .64 percent per year, barely ahead of world population growth. It then took a stiff nose-dive in the early 1980s before leveling off. Since then, for the past twenty years, oil production has roughly kept pace with world population growth – the slowest rate of growth since the industry matured in the nineteenth century.

What has caused the slowdown in per capita oil production? Does this signify a problem?

Yes, says oil geologist Dr. Colin Campbell. Following on the earlier work of Shell oil geologist Dr. M. K. Hubbert, Campbell argues that, just as U.S. production peaked in 1970 (an event predicted by Hubbert in 1956), so too will global oil production peak within the next few years. The current consensus among Campbell and allied analysts appears to be somewhere between the years 2005 to 2010.

The amount of recoverable petroleum is finite, argues Campbell, and world demand continues to grow. Indeed, world population is more than double what it was a mere 50 years ago.

Moreover, we're just not discovering the big oil fields necessary to maintain our level of consumption. Campbell argues that world discoveries of petroleum actually peaked in 1964. Discoveries since then, including the fields in Alaska, North Sea, and Caspian Sea, have not equaled the magnitude of the Middle Eastern discoveries of the 1930s.

It's not that we will "run out" of oil by 2010, he says, but that the era of *cheap oil* will be over, forever. Which means that, for all practical purposes, oil will increasingly be absent

from our lives. This would likely be catastrophic, causing worldwide blackouts and transportation shut downs. How would people survive?

Not surprisingly, others have challenged Campbell's view, in particular his assessment of Ultimate Recoverable Reserves (URR). This refers to the total amount of oil in the world – past, present, and future – that can be recovered from the ground. Campbell puts the figure at 1.8 trillion barrels. The U.S. Geologic Survey in 2000, however, placed it at 3 trillion barrels, indicating that much more oil remains to be discovered. The government analysts also argued that new technologies can enable us to extract more oil and thus enlarge in practical terms the size of proven reserves.

Conflicting statistics make this a difficult subject. Worse, political factors inevitably arise to motivate nations and industries to fudge the numbers. Thus concluded a study by Sweden's University of Uppsala, which appeared in *New Scientist* and was reported in October 2003 by CNN. According to the study, a number of nations, particularly in the Middle East, have exaggerated the size of their reserves, so much so that the world's oil reserves are perhaps 80 percent less than official estimates have predicted. The team predicts that world production levels of oil will peak in around 2010. According to Professor Kjell Alekett of the project, we are "facing a very critical situation globally."

#### ALTERNATIVE FUELS

What of alternative fuels? Can the hydrogen fuel cell, for instance, bail us out?

The so-called "hydrogen economy"

may indeed have some long-term potential. For the near future, it appears equally clear that the phrase is pure hype. The main problem is that hydrogen itself is not an energy source (unless one wishes to create miniature suns through controlled fusion, a prospect that is always 'fifteen years down the road' according to one industry expert). Oil, natural gas, coal, and wood are all sources of energy. Hydrogen is a *carrier* of energy. The cell itself must be charged from other sources of fuel.

While hydrogen is the most abundant element in the universe, on Earth it exists in two major forms: water and methane (e.g. natural gas). Since fuel cells require pure hydrogen, it must be extracted from its bond. In both cases, this takes a substantial amount of energy. In practical terms, this means you need a power plant to provide that energy, and most of America's power plants are powered by fossil fuels. Incidentally, natural gas – our *other* fossil fuel – is approaching its own state of crisis in North America, a problem of aging fields coupled with ever-increasing demand.

If not fossil fuels, perhaps renewable sources of energy can charge our fuel cells – sources like biomass, wind, or solar power. Perhaps, but almost certainly not in the quantity provided by fossil fuels, which have been incredibly abundant. Will ordinary people be able to charge their car batteries on local wind or solar generators? Or fly from Los Angeles to New York?

There are some glimmers of hope. Biodiesel fuel, a remarkable fuel source derived from animal and vegetable oils, might partially replace petroleum. Also offering some hope is ethanol, which is made primarily

from corn. But once again we come to the problem of *quantity*. How much corn must we grow to fuel the world's energy needs? Is it even possible to grow the amount of fuel necessary to satisfy our insatiable hunger for energy, considering that water resources are already stretched to the breaking point?

### EXOTIC TECHNOLOGY

Now another piece to the puzzle. More than fifty years of reliable military and civilian reports lead to the inescapable conclusion that there are unexplained vehicles traversing the skies and oceans of this world. The performance capabilities of these vehicles are far beyond anything our public, conventional, science has devised.

The topic of unidentified flying objects is highly charged, but let's for the moment forget about aliens. Let's just look at a few of the completely confirmed reports of advanced technology.

The Area 51 sightings, for instance, of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Many reliable witnesses observed what were clearly military "UFOs" darting and maneuvering in central Nevada in ways that were non-aerodynamic.

Or the Belgian triangle events, from the same period of time. In 1989 and 1990, thousands of Belgian witnesses saw a flying triangle that demonstrated amazing performance capabilities, such as near-silent flying, extreme maneuverability, and instant acceleration to incredible speeds. F-16 interceptors were helpless against it. This also appears to be the same object that invaded Soviet airspace during the spring of 1990, an event that is well documented in Soviet military records and among civilian witnesses.

Or the famous "cop sighting" of an enormous triangular object over several Illinois towns in January 2000. Here we have another low-flying object seen by many people able to accelerate instantly, and without a sound.

Since these are all fairly recent, the most common explanation is that they are the secret products of the U.S. military-scientific world. The black world, as it is often called. In short, the argument is that we have our own flying saucers – and it's not a bad argument, either.

Rumors of anti-gravity and field

propulsion have been leaking out for more than a decade. During the 1980s, aerospace journalist James Goodall cultivated a number of inside sources from Groom Lake at Area 51. He asked one of them, "do you believe in UFOs?" To which the source answered, "absolutely, positively, they do exist." At a later date the source told Goodall that "we have things in the Nevada desert that would make George Lucas envious." A clear reference that the black world possesses technology beyond that portrayed in the movie "Star Wars."

Several questions present themselves. Do these vehicles incorporate known physics, or something beyond the comprehension of mainstream science? And, considering the finite nature of our own energy resources, what is their source of power? Is this something that the rest of us might want to know about?

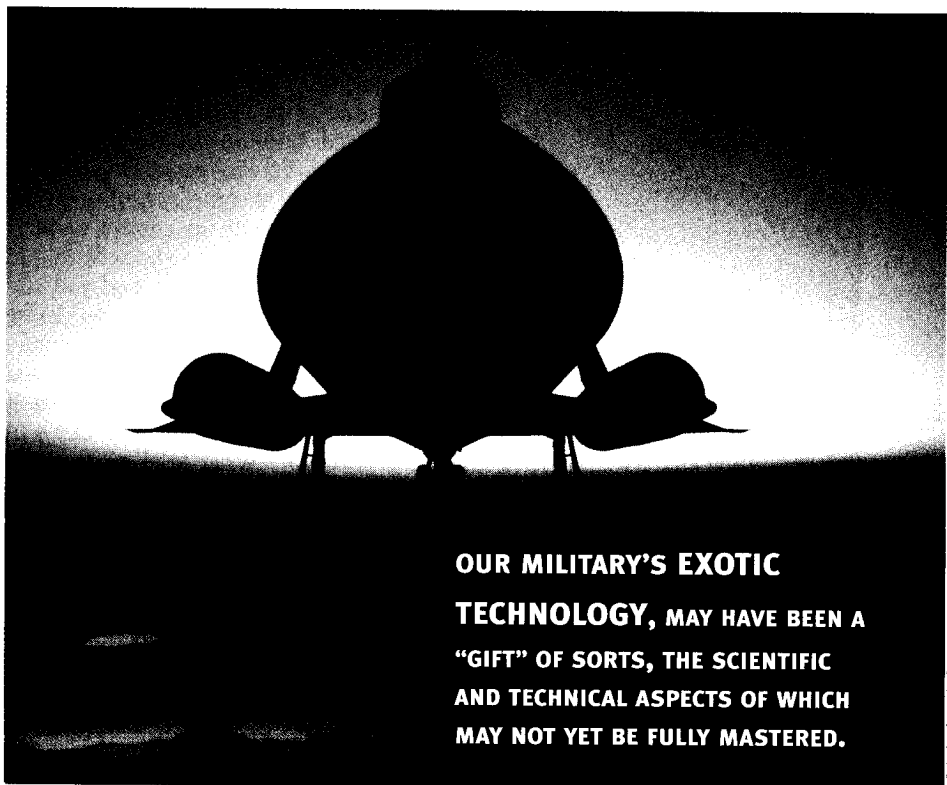
One scientist who wished to remain anonymous, but with insight into these matters, speculated that the energy for this technology might actually be abundant and cheap, but that the "device materials and technology to get at it are daunting and expensive." Moreover, translating all this to the private sector – assuming

the technological aspects could even be handled – would entail "great time and difficulty."

We are, after all, talking about a world transition from fossil fuels to an alternative. The whole scenario calls to mind an extreme medical operation in which a patient's entire circulatory system must be re-routed without killing him. Even the simplest transition, conceivably to hydrogen fuel cells, would be very difficult given the tremendous inertia of the fossil fuel industry. As for near-term and mid-range solutions, this scientist considered hydrogen to be the most likely direction – first from hydrocarbons (e.g. natural gas), then from water. Speculation about long-term solutions, he told me, was "very difficult."

As we stare in the face of what could well be our own limited timeline, we may consider asking just what answers our military has that might be useful.

Unfortunately, this is where we run into the unpleasant reality that we citizens are no longer masters of our government. Transcending our officially established political system is a national security state that answers only to itself. Prying infor-



**OUR MILITARY'S EXOTIC TECHNOLOGY, MAY HAVE BEEN A "GIFT" OF SORTS, THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF WHICH MAY NOT YET BE FULLY MASTERED.**

mation out of it will be a Herculean task, and perhaps among the most critically important tasks we face in our very survival.

Another interesting perspective related to the subject of exotic technologies was expressed in an article written a few years ago by Dr. Pierre Guérin, one of France's most distinguished astronomers. For many years, Guerin was engaged at the Pic du Midi Observatory in the Pyrenees and the famous Institut d'Astrophysique de Paris.

Guérin argued that the sightings of exotic craft around Area 51 would appear to involve a breakthrough in theoretical physics, most likely involving the harnessing of gravity for purposes of propulsion. Yet, he maintained, it would be nearly impossible (at least very implausible) that even the super-secret world inside Area 51 could develop such a breakthrough without the rest of the world knowing about it. Moreover, if the U.S. military does have advanced technology based on principles of anti-gravity, "such information would necessarily have to be of a non-terrestrial origin." Recovery of Roswell wreckage? Not in his opinion. Rather, Guérin considered it more likely "that actual exchanges have taken place with the possessors of a more advanced science."

Of course, if you study the long history of UFO reports, and not merely those of the past few years, it becomes very difficult to deny the probability that the technology to fly these objects came from a civilization other than our own. Extraterrestrial.

I have read and re-read hundreds of military reports that describe encounters with craft that are simply astonishing. It is simply not credible to assign such technology to secret breakthroughs in the 1940s. All through the summer of 1947, U.S. military personnel reported such things.

Here is one example of many. A memo from the Fourth Air Force Headquarters describes an event from August 14, 1947 in which American military personnel in Guam reported two objects – "small, crescent-shaped, and traveling at a speed twice that of a fighter plane" – flying in a zigzag motion over Harmon Field at 10:40 a.m. The objects flew westerly at 1,200 feet

and disappeared into clouds. A few seconds later, a single object, possibly one of those just seen, emerged from clouds and proceeded west.

What can fly in a zigzag motion? At twice the speed of a fighter plane? In 1947? If this were an isolated report, we could dismiss it. But it is one of hundreds that are in the public domain, and undoubtedly many more that are not.

The most logical explanation, it seems to me, is that such technology came from elsewhere. Indeed, when you gauge the reaction of our military establishment, this seems even more so to be the case. Air Force Captain Edward Ruppelt, who headed Project Blue Book's UFO investigation in the early 1950s, described the reaction within the higher levels of the military in 1947 as "confusion to the point of panic." It's not hard to see why that would be so.

It would appear, then, that our military's exotic technology may have been a "gift" of sorts, the scientific and technical aspects of which may not yet be fully mastered.

### WHAT DO "THEY" THINK?

We are led to the final question. If you presume the existence of a non-human intelligence behind many of the historical UFO sightings, as I do, then what are *they* doing here? What do *they* think about our situation?

Discussing the intentions of an advanced non-human intelligence is probably a no-win scenario. Verifiable facts are hard to come by. Our scientists are used to being in control of their experiments. You take a bacterium, put it under the microscope, and you can control what goes on. You can devise experimental protocols and make observations in a detached, controlled environment. But can you do that if you're *not* the most intelligent factor in the equation? What level of scientific control can you expect to have, if a more intelligent species won't let you?

Still, there are a few things on which we can reasonably speculate. It appears, for instance, that these beings either have no desire to become openly known to us, or else there is something preventing them from doing so. I'm betting on the former. Whether they have a policy of indifference or hostility I don't

know, but I have a hard time believing that they are benevolent.

How might they view us? I'm guessing as a species with significant intelligence, whose people cover a broad spectrum of personalities, from socially-motivated altruism to insatiable greed, from gentle affability to savage murderousness. At any opportunity, we engage in the quest for self-gratification. For the past few centuries, we have exploited the most powerful of all tools: science. I think it's fair to assume that the development of science and technology is a prime watershed throughout the universe, and would constitute ample cause for others to take notice.

Our exploitation of science has taken us through exponential levels of growth in our understanding of the nature of reality, our ability to manipulate our world, and the quality of our weaponry, to name a few things. We are also now developing machine intelligence that some experts believe will rival or surpass our own native, biological, intelligence in many crucial areas – within the next generation or two. If the observing aliens tend to take a long-term view of things (and why wouldn't they?), they must view our recent transformation with a mixture of, well, shock and awe.

Fundamentally, our civilization's "growth chart" has skyrocketed to a height that seemed utterly impossible a mere generation or two ago – to say nothing of a few centuries ago. But this rocket isn't stable, and any advanced non-human intelligence must know this. They must see, for instance, that our dependence on fossil fuels as the basis of our civilization has provided us with great power, and placed us in equally great danger.

Why would they passively watch the spectacle of a collective flameout that seems all-too-likely? One answer is, maybe they're not. If you study abduction reports, you know that researchers uniformly describe "medical"-type procedures being performed on humans. It is not difficult to speculate that they are collecting genetic samples, just as our own scientists collect them from endangered species. Maybe they're saving what DNA they can: not the most encouraging thought.

One thing that seems clear to me is that we are on our own.

Consider how the UFO phenome-

non has interacted with our species since we've begun to notice them. Amazed witnesses from around the world see incredibly advanced technology from entities and origins unknown. The vast majority of them never discuss what they see, except perhaps to a close friend or family member. After all, if you saw what you believed was a "real" UFO, who would you tell? The police? Your boss? The Air Force? In fact, there are no institutional structures, save a few private websites, for people to report or even discuss a sighting that is probably the most incredible thing they ever saw.

Thus we face this phenomenon in a completely atomized and unorganized manner, without even the ability to obtain any cooperation from our own elected government officials. Neither the aliens nor our own leaders appear willing or able to talk.

Perhaps these aliens are godlike masters of space and time who know it will all work out well for us in the long run. Perhaps they're just letting us go through the normal, necessary, growing pains that any advanced race must experience.

But I'm no super-intelligent alien, and I can plainly see that we are placing ourselves in tremendous collective danger. A danger of falling off a precipice which we may never again get the opportunity to climb. After all, the hydrocarbons are a one-time gift from Mother Earth. We have one and only one shot at using them before moving on to the next level, whatever that will be. If we blow it, there may never be a second chance.

### WHEN THE CRISIS HITS

A final thought arises. What would happen in the event of a crisis? When the industrial world lacks sufficient energy or fresh water – when people can't eat, drink, have electricity, or heat their homes?

If there are any energy answers buried in the depths of Area 51 or some equally secure and secret facility, can we expect to be saved by our national security masters before the world collapses into chaos? Or will we be left to die while they fortify themselves in secured and well-provisioned bunkers?

Some people have suggested that the "big boys" are holding back free

energy until we run out of fossil fuels, and will then find a way to charge us for use of that energy – no longer free. More or less a business-as-usual scenario.

Such complacency astonishes me. It reinforces my opinion that we have become like Stalinist peasants, waiting for salvation from The Boss. Forgive me for not sharing such optimism. The hidden technologies that theoretically would save us if made available, could just as easily be withheld – to hang us.

The extent to which our national security elite communicates or collaborates with alien intelligences is also important. The answer to that question could well enable us to decide what our attitude toward such aliens ought to be. Perhaps our military is simply working off of crash retrievals, with no communication or collaboration. But if an alien group is actively here, and is parceling out the technology, this would greatly complicate matters. Whether this would make the aliens "good" or "bad" would depend on many things, including the intentions of their human "allies."

Questions like these bring the topic of UFOs to another level of importance altogether. It is one thing to speculate on the purely scientific issue of whether or not there is an alien intelligence here with us on this planet. It is quite another to inquire into the topic of UFOs as a matter of our very survival.

For the time being, UFO research will be most useful if it addresses such practical matters. Safe armchair philosophizing about the likelihood of life elsewhere – essentially the SETI approach – will accomplish nothing except to keep the subject safe. The aliens can remain "out there," and we can retain the false historical and ideological assumptions with which we were raised.

But a full recognition of the UFO phenomenon is like an encounter with the Hindu Goddess Shiva, destroyer of worlds. Our old assumptions die, and we must reconstruct our understanding of reality.

Unfortunately, our actual, physical, world may be approaching its own encounter with Shiva. We need to get some revolutionary answers, for we live in revolutionary times. ▀



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