

**Statement on the UFO Phenomenon, Prepared for Delivery before the Special Political Committee of the United Nations Organization, New York City, November 27, 1978, by Jacques F. Vallée, PhD, Information Scientist, Palo Alto, California.**

Mr. Chairman,

In the process of science it is common for old human ideas to be challenged by new facts. New knowledge is born of this challenge.

In the process of social development it is common for new knowledge to trigger emotional reactions with far-reaching cultural and political effects. New beliefs are born of this confrontation.

The frequent reporting of unexplained phenomena in the sky of many countries during the last thirty years presents an opportunity to observe both of these processes.

In the documents circulated prior to this meeting, and in our preliminary discussions with His Excellency Mr. Kurt Waldheim and representatives of the Outer Space Affairs Group, the essential facts of the phenomenon have been stated by Dr. J. Allen Hynek, by Dr. Claude Poher, and by myself. Accordingly, I will limit my remarks to one aspect of the phenomenon which touches directly on the role of your Committee.

To be specific, I would like to call your attention to a new social movement based on the expectation of contact with beings



**United Nations meeting in the Secretary General's conference room. From left: Jacques Vallée, Claude Poher, J. Allen Hynek. 27 Nov. 1978**

from outer space. This belief, in many ways, is an emotional one. Although the UFO phenomenon is real, and appears to be caused by an unknown physical stimulus, I have so far failed to discover any evidence that it represented the arrival of visitors from outer space.

Instead it is my conclusion, Mr. Chairman, that this phenomenon has three aspects.

The *first aspect* is a physical manifestation that can and should be investigated by means of already available scientific equipment. Dr. Claude Poher, in his recently concluded study sponsored by an agency of the French Government, has now shown the way in this direction. This year the Spanish armed forces have also released their files on cases that had resisted analysis by their experts. There is no lack of physical data, and there is no lack of competent scientists who are willing to examine them with an open mind.

The *second aspect* of the UFO phenomenon is psycho-physiological. Witnesses at the scene exhibit disorientation symptoms, a loss of the sense of time, partial paralysis or loss of voluntary muscle control, auditory and visual hallucinations, eye complaints ranging from conjunctivitis to temporary blindness, massive psychic reactions, and longer-term effects, such as disturbance of sleep and dream patterns and radical behavior changes. I do not believe it is within the province or the budget of the United Nations to address such effects directly, except where the United Nations Organization can serve its traditional role in disseminating scientific information and facilitating exchanges among scholars.

It is the *third aspect* of the UFO phenomenon which deserves your full attention here, Mr. Chairman. This third aspect is the social belief system which has been generated in all the nations represented on this committee by the expectation of space visitors. This belief has been nurtured by the lack of serious attention given to genuine reports of UFOs, and it is creating new religious, cultural, and political concepts of which social science has taken little notice.

I have spent more than fifteen years conducting studies of the reports made through official and unofficial channels in France and in the United States. These analyses have been supported by extensive computer statistics. In addition, I have been in frequent communication with scientists in other parts of the world. The conclusions I have reached about the social effects of the UFO phenomenon in the cultures I have studied are the following.

1. The belief in space visitors is independent of the physical reality of the UFO phenomenon. In terms of social science, we might say that something is "real" if enough people believe in it. The UFO phenomenon has now reached this point. The question of knowing whether or not UFOs are physically "real" is becoming secondary in the mind of the public.

2. The belief in the imminence of UFO "contact" is an indication of a widening gap between the public and science. We are beginning to pay the price for the negative and prejudiced atti-

tude with which our scientific institutions have treated sincere witnesses of UFO phenomena. Lack of serious, open-minded research in this field has encouraged these witnesses to think that science is incapable of dealing with the phenomena. This attitude has led many people to seek answers outside the rational pursuit of knowledge to which science is dedicated. Only an open exchange of information on the subject could now correct this dangerous trend.

3. In the absence of serious, unbiased research on the subject, the belief in the imminence of UFO "contact" undermines the image of Man as a master of his own destiny. In recent years we have seen many books arguing that the Earth had been visited by space travelers in prehistoric times. Although this theory deserves serious study, it is leading many people to suggest that the great achievements of mankind would have been impossible without celestial intervention: the development of agriculture, the mastery of fire, and the bases of civilization are credited to so-called "higher beings." Not only does this idea contradict many archeological facts, it encourages passive expectation of another visit by friendly space creatures to solve current human problems.

4. The expectation of contact with space visitors promotes the concept of political unification of our planet. Through the belief in space entities, a strong and beautiful yearning for global peace is expressing itself. The UFO phenomenon is providing an outside focus for human emotions. Whether this becomes a factor for positive or negative social change will depend on the way in which these emotions are treated and on the seriousness with which the underlying physical phenomenon is investigated. Such is the challenge before this Committee.

Mr. Chairman, it is not my role to suggest a specific approach to this complex problem. The scientists with whom I am in contact would welcome an opportunity to share their data and their ideas within any structure that could be made available for this purpose.

All the great nations of the world are represented on this committee. Let us keep in mind that the UFO phenomenon may represent an even greater reality. It is our choice to treat it as a threat or as an opportunity for human knowledge.