

Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena: Policy Implications for the Government of the United Kingdom

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Executive Summary

Unidentified anomalous phenomena (UAP), previously known as unidentified flying objects (UFOs), are real physical objects that have been seen around the world for decades. They are a global phenomenon. Many governments have conducted UAP investigations and disclosed significant military and civilian encounters with them. UAP are advanced technological objects that have registered on calibrated military instrumentation that include radar, infrared, electro-optical, and weapon seekers. There are numerous incidents where UAP have been reported near nuclear weapons technology and capabilities. Furthermore, there is legitimate reason to conjecture that in the near future, the US government will publicly disclose that a technologically advanced non-human intelligence (NHI) is responsible for UAP and engaging with humanity and the planet. We refer to this as “UAP disclosure.” Indeed, credible testimony from US Navy pilots and former high-ranking US government officials, along with recent legislation on UAP enacted through defence spending bills, strongly suggests that the US government is already in the process of disclosing information about UAP.

The UAP subject clearly holds enormous public interest. If UAP prove not to be designed by human beings, then we are dealing with unprecedented issues of existential consequence for humanity. We would have to acknowledge the existence and terrestrial presence of a technologically advanced non-human intelligence. Humanity would enter a new paradigm of greater significance than even the Copernican Revolution.

If there is verified information about NHI, it should not be the sole preserve of governments. Humanity has a moral right to know. Furthermore, concealing information of this magnitude is not a viable long-term solution, as it is likely to be revealed eventually. If this happens abruptly and in an uncontrolled manner, it could lead to significant societal disruption. This could occur through a variety of means, such as the government of the United States, an adversary, a scientific study, or even NHI themselves (should they exist). The UK government can manage the risk of uncontrolled disclosure by actively developing a careful plan to release and discuss information on UAP. This will take being proactive rather than reactive, engaging with our allies, and carefully planning for a post-disclosure world.

Whichever political party forms the next UK government after the general election on 4 July 2024, they must change the UK’s current position on UAP. Despite engaging in the serious study of UAP in the past, the UK government is almost silent on the issue today. The Cabinet is responsible for policy decisions on UAP, but Parliament should be as well—due to its role in examining and challenging the government, as well as its responsibility to the entire UK population. The UK government will likely face myriad issues on the UAP topic, so it is critical the civil service is proactively engaged as well.

Where should the next UK government begin? The place to start is the UK’s National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA), owned by the Cabinet Office. This is the UK government’s principal tool for identifying and assessing national security risks faced by the UK and the public, and it has an unclassified and publicly available counterpart in the National Risk Register. Unidentified anomalous phenomena or variants thereof, do not feature in the UK’s National Risk Register nor an internal risk dossier drawn up by the Labour Party’s Chief of Staff, and are unlikely to be dealt with in the National Security Risk Assessment.

Some office or agency in the UK government is likely to have knowledge of UAP because of the UK’s membership in the Five Eyes intelligence alliance of the US, the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Indeed, two senior

members of the US Intelligence Community have publicly stated recently that the Five Eyes has been briefed on the UAP topic. If the UK does have UAP knowledge, it likely resides within the Ministry of Defence and the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), and perhaps the Cabinet as well.

This white paper implores the UK government to publicly treat the UAP topic with the seriousness it deserves. The policy implications pervade almost every area of government and society; they raise innumerable questions that need to be categorised and investigated. In this paper, we identify the policy implications for the UK government and discuss them as they relate to five broad areas of government and society:

1. **Government and National Security:** As advanced technological objects, UAP present a risk to national security and flight safety that must be expertly assessed by the military and Intelligence Community, irrespective of their origin. There is also the risk of the “technological surprise” that could result if some states are secretly attempting to emulate and weaponize the technological capabilities of UAP, and one prevails. If UAP prove not to be designed by human beings, then we may be forced to acknowledge the existence of a power and intelligence greater than any government. This presents risks to the legitimacy of existing anthropocentric governance structures, and these risks may be amplified by failures of the government accountability and a lack of public trust.
2. **International Relations:** UAP are a global phenomenon necessitating some degree of international cooperation and collaboration on information-sharing, investigation, and public communication. These actions may reduce the risk of rapid uncontrolled disclosure. Countries may want to consider new treaties to prevent the weaponization of UAP-related technologies and collective action through a supranational organisation such as the United Nations.
3. **Scientific Progress and UK Competitiveness:** The scientific investigation of UAP may prompt new investment opportunities and enable extraordinary technological progress in many sectors of the economy, both at home and abroad. While that progress could be beneficial, it might also turn out to be disruptive to the economic status quo and require domestic and international policy responses.
4. **Financial Stability:** UAP disclosure presents risks to financial stability because of the potential impact of disclosure and paradigm-changing UAP-related technologies on existing financial markets. The Bank of England should take action to address the UAP risk in order to avoid financial instability, particularly given the inarguably global nature of financial markets.
5. **Social Implications:** There would be “ontological shock” if UAP prove not to be designed by human beings. The government would need to think very carefully about how it communicates any such news to its citizens and what impact it might have on society, leadership, the economy, and the demand for mental health support services. The UK government should engage with and seek input from the Church of England and all other Christian denominations in the UK. An interfaith dialogue and eventually a council should be set up for the leaders of the Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish and Buddhist faiths in the UK.

We also make the following five recommendations for the UK government:

1. **Establish the Facts:** We recommend that the Cabinet and Parliament be provided with full briefings by the British Intelligence Community, Armed Forces, Civil Aviation Authority, and UK Space Agency on the UAP topic. We also recommend the Cabinet and Parliament pay serious attention to the (unclassified) history of government action, legislation, and investigations of UAP since 1947. We also recommend the Cabinet reaches out to our American allies to begin information-sharing on the UAP topic.
2. **UAP Risk Assessment:** We recommend the Cabinet commissions a whole-of-government investigation into the policy implications of UAP, as set out in section 2 of this white paper.
3. **Social Research:** We recommend the Cabinet commissions social research such as surveys, statistical analysis, participant observation, and unstructured interviews to gauge the UK public’s attitudes toward, and awareness of, the UAP topic, and the population’s likely psychological and social response to UAP disclosure. Additionally, we recommend the Cabinet identifies the UK’s critical workers, by occupation, in relation to UAP disclosure. We recommend two of these occupational groups should be executive

government leadership and Bank of England core staff. Social research should be carried out on the identified occupational groups, to gauge, in similar fashion, their awareness of and likely reactions to the UAP topic.

4. **Initial Public Engagement:** We recommend the Cabinet hosts an international summit on UAP in the UK, akin to the AI Safety Summit held at Bletchley Park in November 2023. The AI Safety Summit produced the Bletchley Declaration, a commitment from twenty-eight countries (plus the EU) to collaborate on policy relating to the topic of AI safety. Could the UK instigate similar international collaboration on all matters relating to UAP? We also recommend that the Cabinet, in consultation with Parliament, issues a public statement on UAP, such as (per John Priestland), **“The UK Government acknowledges the legitimacy of unidentified anomalous phenomena (UAP). We are working with our international allies to investigate the causes and their implications.”**
5. **Quantify the Do-Nothing Scenario:** We recommend the Cabinet, in consultation with Parliament, assesses and quantifies the risks and ramifications to the United Kingdom if the government continues the status quo of no policy response on UAP. In particular, the government should consider the question: What happens if there is confirmation that the designers of UAP are not of human origin?

At the Sol Foundation’s inaugural symposium at Stanford University in November 2023, Colonel Karl Nell, who served on the UAP Task Force (a previous US government UAP study programme), proposed a plan for the US government to take the global lead in the “controlled disclosure” of UAP information to the world. “Controlled disclosure” is the official public release, by government, of previously classified government information on UAP, carried out in such a way that the government is responsible for deciding when to selectively disclose UAP records to the public.

The UAP Disclosure Act was an attempt from inside the government of the United States to achieve precisely this goal. But in a world of radical uncertainty, there is no guarantee a controlled plan to disclose UAP information will succeed. As former Governor of the Bank of England Lord Mervyn King and economist Sir John Kay point out, “Beliefs are embodied in a narrative, and the prevailing narrative can change in an abrupt or discontinuous fashion when a sufficiently large number of people see evidence that leads them to change their view.” It is therefore very important that the UK government plans for all scenarios, including one where it is suddenly confirmed that the designers of UAP are not human.

Finally, this white paper recommends that Andrew Bailey, Governor of the Bank of England, raises the UAP topic with the Financial Stability Board’s Standing Committee on Assessment of Vulnerabilities (SCAV) so the SCAV, with its expertise and global purview, can materially assess the financial stability risks of UAP disclosure.

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