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Adobe Portable Document Format Version of Do Nuclear Facilities Attract UFOs?

By Donald A Johnson, PhD

Sun River Research

Bow, NH

ufocat@cufos.org

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Dr. Donald Johnson has kindly provided this article to CUFON so that it may be made available on-line to an interested public. We believe this to be a rare thing in UFOlogical circles: a rational voice backed up by data and appropriate method, and we appreciate the opportunity to make this article available.

The article addresses a contention often made by UFO researchers: that a relationship exists between nuclear facilities and UFO sightings. Dr. Johnson draws upon data from the UFOCAT database for this article.

UFOCAT is a computer database of well over 110,000 UFO reports and related information. It is the result of a more than 30-year effort that began during the Air Force sponsored Colorado UFO Project, (the “Condon Committee.”) UFOCAT was begun by Dr. David R. Saunders, who at the time, was a co-Principal Investigator on the Colorado UFO study and professor of Psychology at the University of Colorado. Dr. Jacques Vallee contributed a large computer catalogue of approximately 6,000 cases at the project’s inception.

The UFOCAT database has existed in some form or another since the spring of 1967 but was neither updated nor utilized 1982 to 1990. In 1976, Dr. Saunders gave his version of UFOCAT to the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS). From then until 1982 it was maintained and updated by Fred Merritt at the Chicago office of CUFOS. In those days the database was kept on a large IBM mainframe computer at a nearby computer facility, with magnetic tape backup. It eventually proved too expensive CUFOS maintain in this form and was removed from active use and stored on tape.

In 1990, Dr. Johnson obtained a copy of UFOCAT from Dr. Saunders courtesy of Dr. John Derr of the U.S. Geological Survey. After conversion from tape backups to a modern relational

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database, and addition of new data, the UFOCAT product of today was realized. The process of updating, adding, and refining data remains an ongoing process

Information about, and purchase of UFOCAT may be accomplished through the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies. See: <http://www.cufos.org/UFOCAT.html> or: 2457 W. Peterson, Chicago, IL 60659, (773) 271-3611. Dr. Johnson may be reached at the email address located at the top of the previous page.

- Jim Klotz - CUFON SYSOP
- Dale Goudie - Information Director

Note: Paragraphs 3 – 5 of this title page are adapted from text describing UFOCAT posted on the CUFOS web site.

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Do Nuclear Facilities Attract UFOs?

Donald A Johnson, PhD
Sun River Research
Bow, NH
ufocat@cufos.org

On numerous occasions, UFOs have been reported over nuclear power plants as well as nuclear research facilities and nuclear weapons storage bunkers at military bases.¹ A good percentage of these reports occurred at highly restricted government research and production facilities, such as Los Alamos, Oak Ridge, Hanford AEC, and Savannah River AEC. Highly trained government scientists and military personnel, who had been granted top-secret military clearances, made many of these reports.

In a well-documented series of incidents in early November 1975, nocturnal lights and unidentified “mystery helicopters” visited a wide spectrum of American military bases and missile sites across the northern tier of this country. Between October 27 and November 10, reports of UFOs over nuclear weapons storage sites were repeatedly made at Loring AFB in northern Maine, Wurtsmith AFB in Michigan, Grand Forks and Minot Air Force Bases in North Dakota, and Malmstrom AFB in Montana. F-106 interceptors were scrambled out of Malmstrom AFB near Great Falls, Montana in response to multiple reports of UFO visits to nearby missile sites near Moore, Harlowton, Lewistown, and several missile sites around Malmstrom AFB.²

A similar rash of incursions occurred in December 1948 (Los Alamos), December 1950 (Oak Ridge), July 1952 (Hanford AEC, Savannah River AEC, and Los Alamos), August 1965 (Warren AFB near Cheyenne, WY), March 1967 (Minot AFB, Malmstrom AFB, and Los Alamos), August 1968 (Ellsworth AFB in South Dakota), August 1980 (Warren AFB, Sandia Labs and Kirtland AFB, NM), December 1980 (Benwaters RAFB, Suffolk, England), and October 1991 (Chernobyl, Ukraine and Arkhangel’sk Missile Base, Russia).

These reports led some to speculate that the intelligences behind UFOs have an interest in nuclear weapons and nuclear power. One feature of these reports suggesting a direct link deals with light rays or energy beams being focused on nuclear materials.³ Multiple independent accounts state that beams of light were directed downward from the UFOs onto the nuclear storage bunkers and underground missile silos, perhaps penetrating them beneath the surface.^{4 5}

¹ The UFOCAT 2002 database lists 289 reports at sites coded as “Missile” or “Nuclear” facilities. These reports date from March 1944, an aerial encounter near Yakima, Washington not far from the huge WWII plutonium production plant at Hanford, to another aerial encounter in October 2001 over a nuclear power plant in Kent, England. At least 52 of these cases are close-encounter reports.

² Fund for UFO Research (1985). Government documents concerning over-flights of military bases in 1975, pp. 98=100.

³ Gestin, Pierre (1973). *Phenomena Spatiaux*, July 1973, p. 26 (Loqueffret, France, February 1961).

⁴ Gross, Loren (1982). *UFOs: A History 1950: April - July*. Fremont, CA: Author, p. 34 (Dugway Proving Grounds, UT, April 25, 1950).

⁵ Hall, Richard H. (2001). *The UFO Evidence Volume II: A thirty-year report*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press (Bentwaters AFB, December 27, 1980)

In addition, there have been unsubstantiated rumors from enlisted men that the telemetry of the weapons at some sites had been changed or that other weapons had been rendered inoperative.^{6 7}

Some researchers have suggested that the occupants of UFOs have a deep concern about the safety of nuclear power, and our proliferation of nuclear weapons, and are therefore keeping a close scrutiny of these sites. During the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster on April 26, 1986, technicians reported that they observed a fiery sphere, similar in color to brass, within 1,000 feet of the damaged Unit 4 reactor during the height of the fire, about three hours after the initial explosion. Two bright red rays shot out from the UFO and were directed at the reactor. It hovered in the area for about three minutes, then the rays vanished and the UFO moved slowly away to the northwest. Radiation levels taken just before the UFO appeared read 3,000 milliroentgens/hour, and after the rays the readings showed 800 milliroentgens/hour. Apparently the UFO had brought down the radiation level.⁸

Is there any statistical evidence that indicates a heightened attention to nuclear sites? In an effort to determine this, we applied the techniques of epidemiology to the UFO evidence accumulated since World War II. Table 1 below was developed from the UFOCAT 2002 database. It compares 164 counties with nuclear facilities to a control group of 164 US counties without nuclear facilities. Nuclear facilities include those plants involved in the storage or manufacturer of nuclear materials, including military bases where nuclear weapons are deployed and commercial or research nuclear power plants. A nuclear facility might be a small commercial nuclear power plant such as Vermont Yankee in Windham County, Vermont; or it might be a nuclear production plant such as Rocky Flats in Jefferson County, Colorado; or it might be a nuclear submarine base such as Bangor Naval Base in Kitsap County, Washington.

The control group counties were selected on the basis of the closest match in population, with an attempt to also match the same region of the country (Northeast, Midwest, South, Mountain, West Coast) as the county with a nuclear facility, and with an attempt to exclude control group counties with military bases that might have held nuclear weapons at one time. The results suggest that there is an important association between the presence of a nuclear facility and the rates of both UFO sightings and close encounters (CE). This association tends to increase with those counties with smaller populations, so the results are further stratified by five population categories:

- (a) counties with populations over 500,000;
- (b) counties with populations between 225,000 and 500,000;
- (c) counties with populations between 101,000 and 225,000;
- (d) counties with populations between 50,000 and 101,000; and
- (e) counties with populations under 50,000.

For US counties with populations between 50,000 and 101,000 the rate of UFO reports peaks at 37.03 per 100,000 people for those counties with nuclear facilities, and this rate is 2.61 times higher than for similar counties without nuclear facilities. Overall, the rate of UFO sighting

⁶ Keyhoe, Donald E (1973). *Aliens from Space: The real story of Unidentified Flying Objects*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, pp. 10-11 (Minot AFB, March 5, 1967).

⁷ Hall, Richard H (2001). *The UFO Evidence Volume II: A thirty-year report*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, p. 333 (Malmstrom AFB, March 16, 1967).

⁸ Stonewell, Paul (1998). *The Soviet UFO Files*. New York: Quadrillion Publishing, pp. 68-69.

reports is 13.84 for nuclear site counties and 9.59 for non-nuclear counties, for a relative risk of 1.44. In other words, they are 1.44 times more likely to occur in these counties. For close encounter reports, the rate is 2.58 per 100,000 compared to 1.79 per 100,000 in non-nuclear counties, for a relative risk of 1.44. Ninety-two of the nuclear site counties are considered UFO “hotspots,” having had four or more UFO close encounters, while only 70 of the non-nuclear counties are rated as UFO hotspots.

The answer about whether nuclear facilities attract UFOs appears to be “yes.” There is an excess of 3,051 UFO reports for nuclear site counties above what would have been predicted based on the non-nuclear counties. For close encounters, there is an excess of 568 close encounter reports over what should have been expected based on other UFO reporting dynamics.

In a previous study using US county data, education was found to be positively correlated with UFO reporting. Those counties with a higher percentage of residents possessing a high school degree were found to produce larger numbers of UFO reports.⁹ So it is important to check if there is a large imbalance in educational level between the nuclear-site and non-nuclear counties selected for this study.

From 1960 US Census data, the average percentage of those adults (over age 25) possessing a high school degree across the 164 nuclear-site counties was 43.7%. This compares to a rate of 38.9% for the 164 non-nuclear counties. In general, it can be stated that nuclear facilities tend to require a more highly educated work force, and this fact may account for the small difference noted between the two groups. Whether this small difference in educational level could explain all of the excess in UFO reports and close encounters seems doubtful.

So we are left with a somewhat troubling finding. Apparently UFO reports do occur more frequently in the vicinity of nuclear sites, after controlling for population and the region of the country. Given that the motives of the intelligences behind UFOs, assuming that UFOs are intelligently controlled, are not well known, we should be concerned. Given the long history of UFO incursions at sensitive, highly-restricted nuclear facilities; and given that the events of September 11, 2001 have drawn attention to the vulnerability of nuclear power plants to terrorist acts, it would seem to behoove national security agencies to re-direct some attention to the issue of UFOs entering restricted air space over nuclear facilities. No matter how possibly benign the motives of the UFO occupants may be, were I the new Director of Homeland Security I would certainly be paying attention to this matter.

⁹ Saunders, David R. (1972). Some new lines for UFO research. MUFON 1972 Conference Proceedings. June 17, 1972, pp 139-145.

Table 1. Do UFO reports occur more often near nuclear facilities?							
A Comparison of United States counties with nuclear facilities to an equal number of counties without such facilities, matched on population and region of country.							
	N		Total Population	UFO Reports	CE Reports	Rate UFOs / 100,000	Rate CEs / 100,000
Cases	164	US Counties w Nuclear Facilities	61,368,144	8,495	1,584	13.84	2.58
Controls	164	US Counties no Nuclear Facilities	56,771,476	5,444	1,016	9.59	1.79
Odds Ratio						1.44	1.44
	N	(a.) Counties w Populations greater than 500,000	Total Population	UFO Reports	CE Reports	Rate UFOs / 100,000	Rate CEs / 100,000
Cases	33	US Counties w Nuclear Facilities	43,341,055	4,939	832	11.40	1.92
Controls	33	US Counties no Nuclear Facilities	38,383,010	3,245	560	8.45	1.46
Odds Ratio						1.35	1.32
	N	(b.) Counties w Populations greater than 225,000 and less than 500,000	Total Population	UFO Reports	CE Reports	Rate UFOs / 100,000	Rate CEs / 100,000
Cases	31	US Counties w Nuclear Facilities	10,918,990	1,700	343	15.57	3.14
Controls	31	US Counties no Nuclear Facilities	11,144,549	1,280	241	11.49	2.16
Odds Ratio						1.36	1.45
	N	(c.) Counties w Populations greater than 101,000 and less than 225,000	Total Population	UFO Reports	CE Reports	Rate UFOs / 100,000	Rate CEs / 100,000
Cases	25	US Counties w Nuclear Facilities	3,519,679	638	136	18.13	3.86
Controls	25	US Counties no Nuclear Facilities	3,649,492	421	95	11.54	2.60
Odds Ratio						1.57	1.48
	N	(d.) Counties w Populations greater than 50,000 and less than 101,000	Total Population	UFO Reports	CE Reports	Rate UFOs / 100,000	Rate CEs / 100,000
Cases	34	US Counties w Nuclear Facilities	2,494,943	924	209	37.03	8.38
Controls	34	US Counties no Nuclear Facilities	2,499,389	355	82	14.20	3.28
Odds Ratio						2.61	2.55
	N	(e.) Counties w Populations less than 50,000	Total Population	UFO Reports	CE Reports	Rate UFOs / 100,000	Rate CEs / 100,000
Cases	42	US Counties w Nuclear Facilities	1,093,477	294	64	26.89	5.85
Controls	42	US Counties no Nuclear Facilities	1,095,036	143	38	13.06	3.47
Odds Ratio						2.06	1.69