



**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION DIVISION  
1155 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1155**

Ref: 22-F-0381  
May 12, 2023

Mr. John Greenwald  
The Black Vault, Inc.  
27305 West Live Oak Road  
Suite #1203  
Castaic, CA 91384

Dear Mr. Greenwald:

This is a final response to your January 5, 2022 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, a copy of which is enclosed for your convenience. We received your request on January 5, 2022, and assigned it FOIA case number 22-F-0381. We ask that you use this number when referring to your request.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (OATSD(PA)), a component of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, conducted a search of their records systems and located seven pages determined to be responsive to the portion of your request regarding briefing cards on the subject of unidentified aerial phenomena. Ms. Tanya Rose, Information Management Director, in her capacity as an Initial Denial Authority, has determined that portions of the seven responsive pages are exempt from release pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(5), inter- and intra- agency memoranda which are deliberative in nature; this exemption is appropriate for internal documents which are part of the decision making process, and contain subjective evaluations, opinions and recommendations; and (b)(6), disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of the personal privacy of individuals. Please note that we have considered the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing records and applying exemptions under the FOIA in the processing of this request.

The OATSD(PA) and the Defense Media Activity (DMA), both components of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, conducted a search of their records systems based on the information provided in your request regarding that portion of your request for media. After thorough searches of the electronic records and files of OATSD(PA) and DMA, no records of the kind you described could be identified. We believe that search methods were appropriate and could reasonably be expected to produce the requested records if they existed. However, if you have additional event or file-related information that indicates that we should have such information or that could assist us in conducting a further search for responsive records, please provide that information to us at your earliest convenience.

In this instance, fees for processing your request were below the threshold for requiring payment. Please note that fees may be assessed on future requests.

If you have any questions or concerns about the foregoing or about the processing of your request, please do not hesitate to contact the Action Officer assigned to your request, Zachary Daniel, at zachary.j.daniel3.civ@mail.mil or 703-693-6489. Additionally, if you have concerns about service received by our office, please contact a member of our Leadership Team at 571-372-0498 or Toll Free at 866-574-4970.

Should you wish to inquire about mediation services, you may contact the OSD/JS FOIA Public Liaison, Toni Fuentes, at 571-372-0462, or by email at OSD.FOIALiaison@mail.mil. You may also contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration to inquire about the FOIA mediation services they offer. The contact information for OGIS is as follows:

Office of Government Information Services  
National Archives and Records Administration  
8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS  
College Park, MD 20740  
E-mail: ogis@nara.gov  
Telephone: 202-741-5770  
Fax: 202-741-5769  
Toll-free: 1-877-684-6448

You have the right to appeal to the appellate authority, Ms. Joo Chung, Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Privacy, Civil Liberties, and Transparency (PCLT), Office of the Secretary of Defense, at the following address: 4800 Mark Center Drive, ATTN: PCLFD, FOIA Appeals, Mailbox #24, Alexandria, VA 22350-1700.

Your appeal must be postmarked within 90 calendar days of the date of this response. Alternatively, you may email your appeal to osd.foia-appeal@mail.mil. If you use email, please include the words "FOIA Appeal" in the subject of the email. Please also reference FOIA case number 22-F-0381 in any appeal correspondence.

We appreciate your patience in the processing of your request. As stated previously, please contact the Action Officer assigned to your request, Zachary Daniel, and reference FOIA case number 22-F-0381, if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

*For Charles C. Marye*

Stephanie L. Carr  
Chief

Enclosures:  
As stated

This document is made available through the declassification efforts  
and research of John Greenewald, Jr., creator of:

# The Black Vault



The Black Vault is the largest online Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)  
document clearinghouse in the world. The research efforts here are  
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released by the U.S. Government & Military.

**Discover the Truth** at: <http://www.theblackvault.com>

## AOIMSG Establishment November 23, 2021

### Executive Summary

Public and news media interest in unidentified aerial phenomena (UAP) remains high. ODNI submitted a preliminary assessment report to Congress on June 25, 2021, as required by the SSCI report attached to the FY20 NDAA. That report noted the challenges associated with assessing UAP occurring on or near DOD training ranges and installations highlighted and also identified the need to make improvements in processes, policies, technologies, and training to improve our ability to understand UAP. On the same day, DSD directed OUSD(I&S) to develop a plan to formalize the mission currently performed by the UAPTF. On Nov. 23, 2021, DSD signed a memo announcing the establishment of the Airborne Object Identification and Management Synchronization Group (AOIMSG) as the successor to the UAPTF; the memo also established the Airborne Object Identification and Management Executive Council (AOIMEXEC) to provide oversight of the AOIMSG.

### Top Line Messages / Talking Points

- We take reports of incursions into our airspace – by any aircraft, identified or unidentified – very seriously, and investigate each one.
- Safety (of our personnel) and security (of our operations) are of paramount concern.
- Our approach has been – and will continue to be – driven by science and data.
- The Deputy Secretary’s direction reflects her desire to ensure the Department is fully aware of objects in our airspace in order to protect safety of flight and national security.
- The AOIMSG construct focuses on proactively identifying objects in Special Use Airspace, rather than simply focusing on items that were observed but not identified. This will help to ensure that we are postured to collect adequate data during the event, instead of only gathering data forensically.
- This has been, and will continue to be, a collaborative effort, involving many organizations across DoD, as well as with interagency partners.
- We currently lack the data to indicate whether UAP are part of a foreign collection program or indicative of a major technology advancement by a potential adversary.
- There is not one single explanation for UAP.
- We need to improve our capacity and capability to further analyze UAP. We need more data, more sensors, more reporting, and more consistency and standardization in reporting.

Coordinated with: OUSD(I&S), Navy

Prepared by: (b)(6)

- The selection of USD(I&S) and the Director of Operations, Joint Staff on the AOIMEXEC reflect the Department's characterization of this issue as both an operational and intelligence problem, and provides strengthened guidance to ensure appropriate efforts are undertaken in each area.
- Implementing guidance with further details on the AOIMSG Director, organizational structure, authorities, and resourcing, is forthcoming.

## Questions and Answers

### **Q. Why is the Deputy Secretary replacing the UAPTF?**

A. The DNI report to Congress highlighted the challenges associated with assessing airborne objects, including UAP, occurring on or near DOD training ranges and installations. It also confirmed that the scope of the UAP activity expands significantly beyond Navy's purview. The report also identified the need to make improvements in processes, policies, technologies, and training to improve our ability to understand UAP.

### **Q. What are the national security threats that the Pentagon is concerned about?**

A. The Department of Defense takes seriously any incursion into our airspace by any aircraft, identified or unidentified, very seriously.

### **Q. Is the U.S. not currently aware of items in its airspace?**

A. Not all objects in U.S. airspace are tracked and identified, especially if they are small and don't pose a threat. However, the increase in unmanned aerial systems and airspace debris has highlighted that there are a number of objects which do pose a concern. This effort lowers the threshold for items to be considered and evaluated to ensure that we are able to identify any items that may pose a threat to safety of flight or national security.

### **Q. Why is the data you have insufficient? What else do you need?**

A. Encounters with UAP are often brief and fleeting, and frequently involve a single source, such as a verbal report or a single photograph. We need more data and a better reporting structure – standardized reporting, timely reporting, and further reducing the stigma about reporting on UAP so that we have more reports for pattern and trend analysis.

### **Q. Who is going to be the AOIMSG Director/what can you tell me about the AOIMSG budget/organization/size/members/personnel/operations/etc.?**

A. As Deputy Secretary Hicks noted in her memo, implementing guidance is forthcoming.

### **Q. Can you explain the SUA term? Why are you using that now?**

A. Special Use Airspace is designated in accordance with 14 CFR Part 73. It's a more accurate term for airspace that the AOIMSG will be focusing on. SUA is airspace that is restricted for national security and other uses, and includes military operations areas, firing ranges, etc. For the AOIMSG, we are not interested in looking at *all* airspace in the world; the AOIMSG will be focused on the areas where there are security risks to our training, operations, and infrastructure. [This is no different than what the UAPTF was focused on – military training ranges and operations airspace.]

**Q. Why is the memo using the term “airborne object” (rather than UAP)?**

A. The term “UAP” still refers to items that are unidentified. The ODNI report in June 2021 noted that most objects were unidentified due to incomplete data. Therefore, this effort seeks to proactively detect, identify and attribute objects to help minimize the overall number of items that are classified as UAP. Additionally, as we’ve said, we need more data, including more reporting. One way to do that is to destigmatize UAP reporting by standardizing and normalizing reporting of airborne objects in SUA – whether the object is a UAP or another object.

**Q. Why is Navy no longer in charge of UAP examinations?**

A. The Department recognizes the great work that Navy did on examining UAPs, both before the UAPTF existed and as the head of the UAPTF. The June 2021 report to Congress confirmed that the scope of UAP activity expands beyond Navy and identified the need for improvement in many areas to better understand UAP; this involves organizations across DoD and the USG interagency, and is better directed at the OSD level rather than by a military department.

**Q: Is the AOIMSG being established under the USD(I&S) because there are intelligence concerns or concerns about foreign actors?**

A: The USD(I&S) has broad responsibilities for intelligence and security, which includes security of U.S. facilities. The USD(I&S) also oversees defense intelligence production and analysis which are critical capabilities to ensure identification of objects. As there are significant operational equities, the Joint staff is also involved.

**Q. What is the mission of the AOIMSG?**

A. The AOIMSG will oversee the Department’s efforts to detect, identify and attribute objects of interest in Special Use Airspace and to assess and mitigate any associated threats to safety of flight or national security.

**Q. Has the Department found any evidence of extraterrestrial technology?**

A. The examinations into incursions by UAPs are still ongoing; we lack sufficient information in our dataset to attribute incidents to specific explanations. It is not the purpose of the AOIMSG to look for evidence of extraterrestrials. Other parts of the government do that; for example, NASA looks for evidence of life on other planets.

## AOIMSG Establishment December 9, 2021

### Executive Summary

Public and news media interest in unidentified aerial phenomena (UAP) remains high. On Nov. 23, 2021, DSD signed a memo announcing the establishment of the Airborne Object Identification and Management Synchronization Group (AOIMSG) as the successor to the UAPTF; the memo also established the Airborne Object Identification and Management Executive Council (AOIMEXEC) to provide oversight of the AOIMSG. The *draft* FY22 NDAA approved by the House on Dec. 7 contains a section directing DoD and ODNI to establish an office, organizational structure, and authorities to address UAP.

### Top Line Messages / Talking Points

- [*Prior to NDAA becoming law:*] We're not going to comment on pending legislation. We're not going to get ahead of the legislative process.
- We take reports of incursions into our airspace – by any aircraft, identified or unidentified – very seriously, and investigate each one.
- Safety (of our personnel) and security (of our operations) are of paramount concern.
- The Deputy Secretary's direction reflects her desire to ensure the Department is fully aware of objects in our airspace in order to protect safety of flight and national security.
- The AOIMSG will focus on proactively identifying objects in Special Use Airspace, rather than simply focusing on items that were observed but not identified. This will help to ensure that we are postured to collect adequate data during the event, instead of only gathering data forensically.
- The AOIMSG will ensure we leverage of the strength of the Department and the IC to normalize UAP reporting, analysis and mitigation into standing processes.
- This has been, and will continue to be, a collaborative effort, involving many organizations across DoD, as well as interagency partners.
- Implementing guidance with further details on the AOIMSG Director, organizational structure, authorities, resourcing, and roles and responsibilities is forthcoming.
- The Department is committed to transparency with the Congress and the American people while balancing its obligation to protect classified information.

## Questions and Answers

(b)(5)

### **Q. Why is the Deputy Secretary replacing the UAPTF?**

A. The DNI report to Congress highlighted the challenges associated with assessing airborne objects, including UAP, occurring on or near DOD training ranges and installations. It also confirmed that the scope of the UAP activity expands significantly beyond Navy's purview. The report also identified the need to make improvements in processes, policies, technologies, and training to improve our ability to understand UAP.

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Coordinated with: OUSD(I&S), ODNI

Prepared by: (b)(6)



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A. The AOIMSG will oversee the Department’s efforts to detect, identify and attribute objects of interest in Special Use Airspace and to assess and mitigate any associated threats to safety of flight or national security.

**Q. Will the AOIMSG be more transparent on UAP encounters than the UAPTF was?**

A. The Department is committed to transparency with the Congress and the American people while balancing its obligation to protect classified information. In executing the AOIMSG mission, the Department will keep the Congress fully and currently informed in both unclassified and classified detail of its activities and findings to enable effective congressional oversight and accountability to the public. The Department is eager to work with Congress as it completes its Fiscal Year 2022 legislation to posture the AOIMSG for success.

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**Additional Background Information (Not for Release)**

(b)(5)

Coordinated with: OUSD(I&S), ODNI

Prepared by: (b)(6)

## Additional Talking Points

- Our approach has been – and will continue to be – driven by science and data.
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- There is not one single explanation for UAP.
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## Additional Questions and Answers

Q. ...?

A. ...

Q. ...?

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