

ABSTRACT

Unidentified flying objects (UFOs) have been a source of concern, anxiety, and ridicule for more than three decades in the United States, and for centuries on a global scale. The question in the case of UFOs is not whether there is other intelligent life in the universe, but whether it has visited Earth, and if not, then what accounts for the thousands of reports of strange lights and phenomena which seem to have no other explanation? Although the number of reports in the media about UFOs has dwindled in recent years, the film "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" rekindled interest in the UFO debate for a short time, and the movie "E.T. -- the Extraterrestrial" refocused attention on the possible existence of other intelligent life in the universe.

This report is an updated edition of the 1976 CRS study by the same title, and adds material on what has happened since the mid-1970's in terms of U.S. Government involvement in solving the UFO puzzle, and information that has been released under the Freedom of Information Act.