



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

Ref: 21-F-0938
March 4, 2022

Mr. John Greenewald, Jr.
The Black Vault
27305 W. Live Oak Road
Suite #1203
Castaic, CA 91384

Dear Mr. Greenewald:

This is a final response to your April 30, 2021 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, a copy of which is enclosed for your convenience. We received your request on May 3, 2021, and assigned it FOIA case number 21-F-0938. We ask that you use this number when referring to your request.

The Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence & Security, and DoD Office of the General Counsel, components of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, conducted searches of their records systems and located six pages determined to be responsive to your request. Ms. Tanya Rose, Information Management Director; Mr. Brian Kreitlow, Chief, Collection Policy Division; and Mr. David Bennet, Director, Office of Information Counsel, in their capacities as Initial Denial Authorities, have determined that portions of the six responsive pages are exempt from release pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(5), which pertains to 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), as disclosure of the information would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of the personal privacy of individuals.

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, Jasmine Anderson, at jasmine.j.anderson.civ@mail.mil or 571-372-0420. 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, or the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration. 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: 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 21-F-0938 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, Jasmine Anderson, and reference FOIA case number 21-F-0938, if you have any questions or concerns.


Sincerely,

for Pamela Andrews
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 responsible for the declassification of hundreds of thousands of pages released by the U.S. Government & Military.

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

From: [Lue Abcde](#)
To: (b)(6)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Substantiating documentation - Elizondo
Date: Wednesday, June 5, 2019 3:59:55 PM
Attachments: (b)(5)

Hi (b)(6)

I am reaching out in a final effort to avoid seeing this unfortunate situation escalate. As a soldier and public servant with decades of unblemished service, these false accusations are personally painful as you can well imagine. Moreover, the clearly inaccurate information released by your office has the potential to profoundly damage my career and with it my ability to provide for my wife and family.

In that regard, attached you will find a sample of unclassified correspondence that clearly demonstrates how active I remained on the UAP issue right up until my departure, to include interagency coordination with the IC on this important issue and operational collaboration with the US Navy. The transition plans referenced herein were briefed to and approved by a senior political appointee who reported directly to General Mattis. Some of the F-18 pilots and Navy officials can confirm multiple briefings and discussions with this individual and others, to include Congress. Some of these discussions and briefings actually occurred inside the SecDef's personal office suite. That is why my emails reference "the front office."

Officials from other agencies and departments (ie DIA and CIA) attended meetings I held to coordinate activities on this topic in support of the men and women in the US Navy, who as you know were and still are deeply perplexed and concerned by this phenomenon. AATIP was an official program that was never shut down, when the funding dried-up I continued to lead and interact with officials in DoD and other agencies to the best of my ability in the interest of national security. When I departed, as is clear from my resignation letter, it was purely out of frustration with my ability to gain additional traction and support. But I put my shoulder to the wheel all those years and worked diligently to maintain a focus on the AATIP issue and continued to coordinate and promote collection and analysis. Call it an "activity" vs a "program" if you will, but if this escalates it will be easy to prove how active I remained in support of our men and women in uniform, especially in the US Navy. If some who were not privy to my actions want to portray me as a rogue, well bad on them for sitting on their hands and doing nothing about recurring intrusions into US airspace and military operating areas and good on me for continuing to risk my reputation and career in support of the US Navy and the nation. Personally, it is outrageous so many others did so little in the face of what the Navy now publicly acknowledges is serious national security issue. The plain truth is that I did everything I could to maintain focus and attention on this vital issue when so many others continued to sweep it under the rug purely for fear of the stigma and possible impact on their reputations. And for that the department wants to make me out to be the bad guy? An imposter? For showing initiative and support to the Navy and others? For keeping this effort going as best I could -- an effort now fully vindicated by the Navy itself?

As you can well imagine, I am not only hurt and disappointed but angry. I should if anything be getting accolades for persistence and initiative, especially since the Navy has now publicly acknowledged the seriousness of the issue, something that only occurred because of my efforts. Instead, a knife in the back? Wow, thanks guys! If the department wants to have this out in public we can certainly do so. I can easily establish that Neil took the meetings referenced in these emails and that this plan was blessed by an individual who has departed but was at the time a senior Administration appointee and directly reported to General Mattis. Do you honestly think I

made up the stuff in these emails? Really? Check Neil's calendars and you will see these meetings occurred (as well as innumerable other meetings on my calendars).

I am providing these documents to you to afford you and the Department a final opportunity to correct the record. Meanwhile, I am being pushed into a corner as you can well imagine and will soon be forced to engage an attorney and respond. The oversight committees are also well aware of my role and I believe appreciative of my efforts.

In conclusion, it seems clear to me and others that there exists an extreme miscommunication among OUSDI staff. I truly hope we can resolve this amicably.

What a sad statement it is that instead of being rewarded for my initiative and persistence, for diligently pursuing an issue so many others were willing to duck, some in the department are instead trying to destroy my career and reputation by sowing disinformation. To reiterate, I was an OUSDI staff member while working with the AATIP portfolio up until the point of my departure. This was previously verified by the DoD Press Secretary in 2017. Check Neil's calendar and you will be able to confirm these meetings occurred -- a small sample of the total number of meetings I was having on a weekly and near daily basis at the time.

I know that you are trying to be a fair and honest broker. I hope you will therefore take this letter in the spirit of a former colleague merely seeking to set the record straight.

Please advise receipt of this communication if you would at your earliest convenience. I am holding off media requests and will continue to do so until I hear from you. As you can imagine, the pressure is growing.

Sincerely and respectfully,

Lue Elizondo

(b)(5)

Regards,

(b)(6)

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, June 3, 2020 12:10 PM

To: Gough, Susan L (Sue) CIV OSD PA (USA) <(b)(6)>

Subject: [Non-DoD Source] REF: AATIP - - ATTENTION: Ms. Gough; Request for Department Action

Ms. Gough,

My name is Luis D. Elizondo, and I am a former staff member of OUSD(I). As you know, since 2017 there has been considerable controversy and confusion generated by your conflicting and often inaccurate statements regarding the AATIP program and my role in it. I am therefore writing today to seek your assistance in correcting the record.

Last fall you released a statement erroneously characterizing the AATIP program, stating, "Neither AATIP nor AAWSAP were UAP related." While I am delighted that you have since corrected the record on this important issue, acknowledging that the program was in fact all about UAPs, you have yet to amend your equally false and misleading comment that I had "no assigned duties in the AATIP program." The truth, as everyone involved in the program knows, is that I ran the program.

After contacting your office to point out the inaccuracy of your statements regarding my role at AATIP, I largely refrained from public comment assuming that you would review this important issue and correct the record. Indeed, your colleague and predecessor, Mr. Sherwood informed me that in light of the Navy's recent admission of my involvement, the Department would be releasing a new statement in the near term that would exonerate me and finally set the record straight.

A year has gone by and I am losing faith in you and your office. Consequently, in a final effort to clarify matters I am providing a list of individuals who can substantiate my lead role in the AATIP program:

The "Honorable Harry Reid"; former Senate Majority Leader and AATIP sponsor

'(b)(6)'; OSD Senior Executive, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Defense

'(b)(6)'; OSD Senior Executive, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Defense

'(b)(6)'; OSD Senior Executive, Senior DoD Liaison to the White House

"Neil Tipton"; OSD Senior Executive, Director of Defense Intelligence for Special Programs, OUSD(I)

"Jay Stratton"; Senior Executive, Office of Naval Intelligence

'(b)(6)'; (b)(6)

'(b)(6)'; (b)(6)

'(b)(6)'; (b)(6)

'(b)(6)'; (b)(6)

'(b)(6)'; (b)(6)

'(b)(6)'; (b)(6)

'(b)(6)'; (b)(6)

'(b)(6)'; (b)(6)

'(b)(6)'; (b)(6)

(b)(6)

"Mr. Christopher Mellon"; Civilian, former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Intelligence

This is only a partial list of individuals I worked with in AATIP who can substantiate my role. If necessary, I can provide the names of other individuals from the Central Intelligence Agency, Department of the Army, Department of the Navy, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and the Senate Staff. Many of these individuals received regular briefings from me and participated in meetings involving the program and its investigation of the UAP phenomenon.

Additionally, I arranged and attended many in-person, official briefings for senior OSD staff, accompanied by military pilots and other personnel involved in UAP incidents. Many of these meetings occurred in the Secretary of Defense office suite which I am certain there are records. If necessary I can supply those names as well, as these meetings occurred frequently and at the behest of senior ranking individuals in the Department. There is also official documentation and records substantiating these meetings and interactions within DoD holdings.

Finally, in the event the above does not suffice, you should know that I transferred my AATIP responsibilities to one of the named individuals above, in writing, and in the presence of other individuals. With this information in hand I cannot imagine any reason you cannot readily clarify the facts and correct the record. As all of these individuals can attest, I remained in the lead role, coordinating and investigating UAP activities in the Department until my resignation from OSD in October 2017.

I have been patient and hopeful for over a year. That is a long time when one's reputation is at stake. Again, I applaud you for finally correcting the record involving AATIP's mission, but your failure to correct the record regarding my involvement in UAP investigations in OSD from 2008 until my departure from OSD in 2017 is contributing to unnecessary misunderstandings and mistrust of both the Department and myself. This is a very serious issue given the impact on my credibility and career prospects, and also the credibility of OSD.

I therefore encourage you to seek whatever information you require (and I am happy to assist you) to ensure the public receives accurate information at the Unclassified level. As you know, there is already great public distrust of the Government regarding the UAP issue. Regrettably, your inconsistent and sometimes erroneous reporting has only intensified the problem.

Although I am confident that via the FOIA process, or through Congressional or press inquiries that the truth will eventually come to light, my hope is to see this issue resolved sooner rather than later. If you are unable or unwilling to correct

the record regarding my role on the UAP issue at DoD, I will have no other choice than to seek redress through the press, Congress, and/or the courts.

In that regard, I have to say that my experience and disappointment in your responsiveness is apparently not unique. As distinguished veteran reporter Tyler Rogoway of The Drive stated in an article in March:

“Simply put, my experience with Susan Gough has been the worst I have had with any of the Defense Department's public affairs personnel, ever. What has transpired, or more accurately what hasn't transpired, over the last six months leaves me with no confidence or trust in this official representing the DoD on the issue.

Having paid a deep personal, emotional, and professional price for your mistakes and inaction over the last year I confess I share Tyler’s feelings and frustration. Nevertheless, I am willing to make a final effort to work with you to correct the record in hopes of sparing the Department any additional and unnecessary embarrassment. I hope you will reach out to those above and do so promptly so this matter can be put to rest.

Please feel free to contact me at any time if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Luis Elizondo