National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001

Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Independent Study Team
Terms of Reference

Preamble

NASA hereby establishes the Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Independent Study Team (UAPIST) as a subordinate group of the Earth Science Advisory Committee (ESAC), a standalone advisory group established under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). The Subcommittee has been established at the discretion of the Director, Earth Science Division, following consultation with the Assistant Deputy Associate Administrator for Research, Science Mission Directorate, as well as the Associate Administrator, Science Mission Directorate.

Principles

NASA leads the world in exploration and is committed to rigorous scientific inquiry. Consistent with NASA's principles of openness, transparency, and scientific integrity, NASA is commissioning the UAPIST in order to examine Unidentified Aerial Phenomena from a scientific perspective, focusing on how NASA can use data and the tools of science to move our understanding forward.

The UAPIST is established as a means to secure the counsel of community experts across diverse areas on matters relevant to potential methods of study of unidentified aerial phenomena. The UAPIST serves as a community-based, interdisciplinary forum for soliciting and coordinating community analysis and input and providing advice. It provides advice to the Earth Science Advisory Committee (ESAC).

Background

On June 25, 2021, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence issued the unclassified report *Preliminary Assessment: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena*. That report concluded that:

- The limited amount of high-quality reporting on unidentified aerial phenomena (UAP) hampers our ability to draw firm conclusions about the nature or intent of UAP.
- In a limited number of incidents, UAP reportedly appeared to exhibit unusual flight characteristics. These observations could be the result of sensor errors, spoofing, or observer misperception and require additional rigorous analysis.
- There are probably multiple types of UAP requiring different explanations based on the range of appearances and behaviors described in the available reporting.

- UAP may pose airspace safety issues and may pose a challenge to U.S. national security.
- Consistent consolidation of reports from across the federal government, standardized reporting, increased collection and analysis, and a streamlined process for screening all such reports against a broad range of relevant USG data will allow for a more sophisticated analysis of UAP that is likely to deepen our understanding.

Statement of Task

The UAPIST shall report on the following questions:

1. What types of scientific data currently collected and archived by NASA or other civilian government entities should be synthesized and analyzed to potentially shed light on the nature and origins of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAP)?
2. What types of scientific data currently collected and held by non-profits and companies should be synthesized and analyzed to potentially shed light on the nature and origins of UAP?
3. What other types of scientific data should be collected by NASA to enhance the potential for developing an understanding of the nature and origins of UAP?
4. Which scientific analysis techniques currently in production could be employed to assess the nature and origins of UAP? Which types of analysis techniques should be developed?
5. In considering the factors above, what basic physical constraints can be placed on the nature and origins of UAP?
6. What civilian airspace data related to UAPs have been collected by government agencies and are available for analysis to a) inform efforts to better understand the nature and origins of UAPs, and b) determine the risk of UAPs to the National Air Space (NAS)?
7. What current reporting protocols and air traffic management (ATM) data acquisition systems can be modified to acquire additional data on past and future UAPs?
8. What potential enhancements to future ATM development efforts can be recommended to acquire data concerning future reported UAPs to assist in the effort to better understand the nature and origin of the UAPs?

Membership

NASA's Science Mission Directorate, in consultation with NASA's Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate, will appoint the Chair and members of the UAPIST for terms of up to one year. Diversity of thought shall be a factor in determining the composition of the UAPIST. The UAPIST will have approximately eight to twelve members chosen with an appropriately broad range of expertise; experience; employer types and sizes; and individual demographics. The membership will consist of experts drawn from U.S. academic, independent, and commercial institutions. Members of the UAPIST who are not Regular Government Employees (RGE) will be designated Special Government Employees (SGE) or Representatives. A NASA civil servant will be appointed as the Designated Federal Officer and Executive Secretary of the UAPIST.

Meetings and Reporting

The UAPIST will hold up to three meetings during the year. The first two meetings will be preparatory while the third meeting will be deliberative. The UAPIST will deliver to the ESAC a full, complete, and open report containing its recommendations, findings, and work products. A full copy of the report will be made publicly available. After public deliberation, the ESAC will deliver a final report to NASA reflecting their findings and recommendations.

Administrative Provisions

Organizational support for the UAPIST will be provided by the Science Mission Directorate. The support will include meeting and logistical support, and any communication requisites, as appropriate.

Duration

These Terms of Reference are terminated at the discretion of the Director, Earth Sciences Division, following consultation with the Associate Administrator, Science Mission Directorate, or in one year, whichever comes first.

KAREN St Germain
Digitally signed by KAREN St Germain
Date: 2022.05.21 21:04:54 -04'00'

Dr. Karen St. Germain
Director, Earth Science Division
Science Mission Directorate

DANIEL EVANS
Digitally signed by DANIEL EVANS
Date: 2022.05.23 08:57:09 -04'00'

Dr. Daniel Evans
Asst. Dep. Associate Administrator for Research
Science Mission Directorate

Thomas Zurbuchen
Digitally signed by Thomas Zurbuchen
Date: 2022.05.24 08:57:48 -04'00'

Dr. Thomas Zurbuchen
Associate Administrator
Science Mission Directorate