

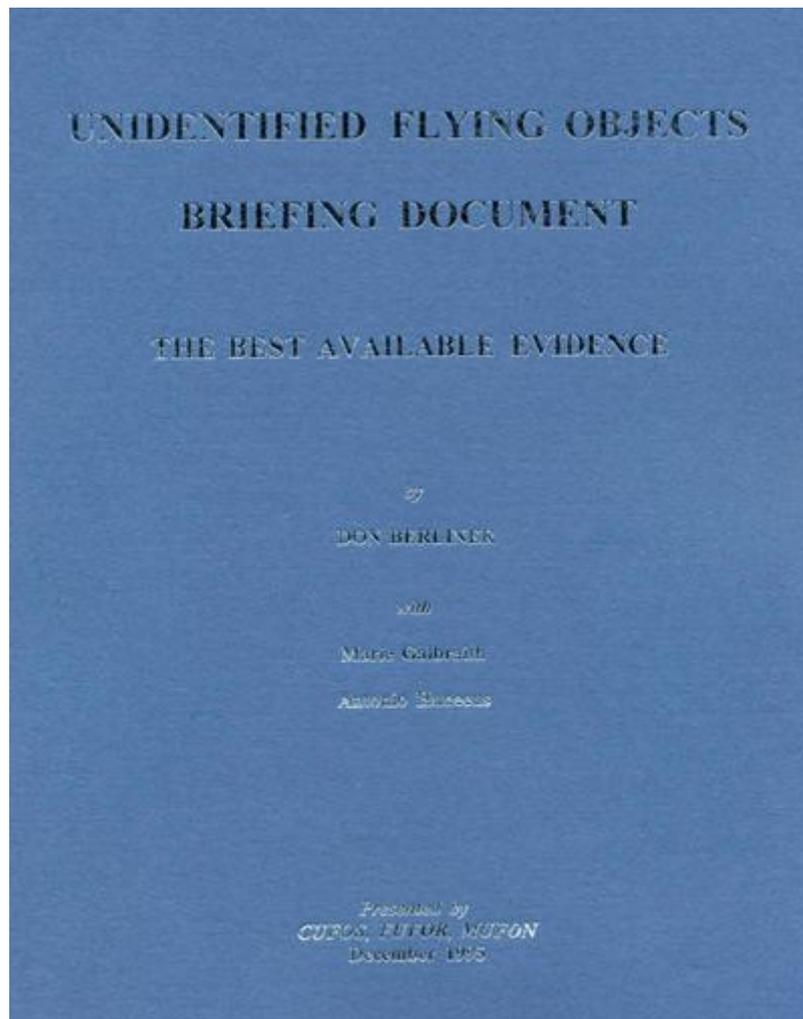
## THE FAMOUS ROCKEFELLER UFO BRIEFING DOCUMENT

Throughout the 1990s, billionaire philanthropist Laurance S. Rockefeller (1910-2004) sponsored and funded a number of UFO-related projects. This has come to be known as the Rockefeller UFO initiative since in some cases they went beyond funding and included an actual lobbying effort to the Clinton White House, undertaken by Rockefeller himself and his lawyer Henry Diamond, in the early and mid-90s. This writer became actively involved in one of these Rockefeller projects, which resulted in a book-length report titled, Unidentified Flying Objects Briefing Document – The Best Available Evidence, finished in December 1995.



Laurance Rockefeller

The project was coordinated by Marie Galbraith, wife of investment banker Evan Galbraith, who served as U.S. ambassador to France during the Reagan administration. The author of the original draft was aviation journalist and long-time ufologist Don Berliner, whose involvement in the field goes back to NICAP (National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena) in the sixties and later with the Fund for UFO Research (FUFOR), which he currently heads. I was brought in the summer of 1995 by Marie Galbraith and Sandy S. Wright of the BSW Foundation, who was involved in the early stages of the project, to help edit the document. I recommended that the international section of the report should be expanded, so in the end I wrote additional "case histories" on important UFO incidents in Russia, Spain and Canada and rewrote the sections dealing with Brazil, Belgium and France, consulting the source documents in the original foreign languages.



The Original Cover (image credit: Antonio Huneus)

Many other people and institutions also helped in the elaboration of the report, including the SOBEPS (the Belgian Society for the Study of Space Phenomena) and the official UFO bureau within the French space agency CNES (then called SEPR, now GEIPAN). The copyright of the Briefing Document was given to the UFO Research Coalition, formed by the three main UFO organizations in the U.S., CUFOs (Center for UFO Studies), FUFOR and MUFON (Mutual UFO Network). The document had a letter of endorsement, dated December 15, 1995, signed by the heads of the three groups in the Coalition: Dr. Mark Rodeghier for CUFOs, Richard Hall for FUFOR, and Walter Andrus for MUFON. The original edition of the UFO Briefing Document was one thousand copies and its main purpose was to send it to selected VIPs in the U.S. and abroad.

3-1-96  
JHG

30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA  
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10112

Room 5600

(212) 649-5600

February 29, 1996

John H. Gibbons, Ph.D.  
Assistant to the President for  
Science and Technology  
Old Executive Office Building, Room 424  
17th and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Jack,

I am pleased to send you the enclosed copy of a report entitled, "Unidentified Flying Objects, the Best Available Evidence."

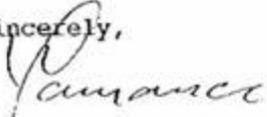
The public interest in UFOs and extraterrestrial intelligence obviously remains very high as evidenced by the recent cover story in Time Magazine, (which I also enclose) and the many television programs including one this week on public television's distinguished NOVA series. I sponsored this report because it seemed useful to bring together the most credible evidence about UFO sightings in the form of eyewitness reports, official statements, and scientific views.

While I do not necessarily agree with every finding and conclusion, I do believe that the evidence presented indicates that this subject merits serious scientific study. Toward that end, I hope that our government, other governments, and the United Nations will cooperate in making any information they may have available.

A new draft of our proposed letter to the President also is enclosed. As always, your reactions will be helpful. In particular, we hope you will be able to follow-up on the pilot amnesty project you suggested.

With warm regard, I am

Sincerely,

  
Laurance S. Rockefeller

A copy of the Briefing Document was sent by Laurance Rockefeller to the White House Science and Technology advisor, Dr. John Gibbons, on February 29, 1996. In his cover letter, released under the Freedom of Information Act together with many other documents related to the Rockefeller UFO initiative, the late philanthropist wrote: "I sponsored this report because it seemed useful to bring together the most credible evidence about UFO sightings in the form of eyewitness reports, official statements, and scientific views. While I do not necessarily agree with every finding and conclusion, I do believe that the evidence presented indicates that this subject merits serious scientific study. Toward that end, I hope that our government, other governments, and the United Nations will cooperate in making any information they may have available."

Unfortunately, the success and impact of the UFO Briefing Document was limited in real political terms. Most people and the press seemed far more interested with the fact that Rockefeller had sponsored it and was interested in UFOs than with the contents of the report and its political, military and scientific implications. One significant exception was France. Because of Marie Galbraith's extensive social and political connections in Paris from the time she had lived in Paris as the American ambassador's wife, many copies were distributed there, including then President Jacques Chirac and the CNES. The Briefing Document eventually became the model for a similar report prepared by a number of former high-ranking French military and intelligence officers and scientists, who formed a study group called COMETA (Committee for In-Depth Studies) that led to the release in 1999 of their own famous report, *UFOs and Defense: What Should We Prepare For?* The authors of the COMETA Report were full of praise for the Briefing Document and particularly Mrs. Galbraith. They wrote:

'In recent years, the three main ufological associations have been brought together by a leading U.S. personality, Marie Galbraith, to conduct a joint study. She is the wife of Evan Griffith Galbraith, who was U.S. ambassador to France from 1981 to 1985. Thus she is well-acquainted with our country and our language, since she lived on Avenue Gabriel. Supported both morally and financially by Laurance Rockefeller, brother of the famous David Rockefeller, she traveled the world to meet the principal scientists interested in UFOs and to collect the best cases.'

'She then oversaw the drafting of a clear and documented book entitled *Unidentified Flying Objects, Briefing Document*, the best available evidence, which was endorsed in 1995 by the chairmen of the three associations CUFOS [Center for UFO Research], FUFOR [Fund for UFO Research], and MUFON [Mutual UFO Network]. She had this work sent to more than a thousand prominent figures throughout the world and, namely, to a large number of U.S. congressmen. Her goal is to get the U.S. government and possibly other governments to end the secrecy surrounding UFOs.'

'For the editors of the book, this secrecy is essentially military in origin: the nation that is first to reproduce the exceptional characteristics of UFOs will dominate the world. The secrecy was justified during the cold war, but it is no longer justified now given the scientific and technical breakthroughs useful to humanity that one can expect [to obtain] from the study of UFOs.'

Perhaps not surprisingly, a French translation of the UFO Briefing Document was published in 2005 by Editions du Rocher as, *OVNI: Document de synthèse*. The back cover description called it, "the American counterpart of the COMETA Report in France."



Bill Clinton shaking hands with Laurance Rockefeller May, 1995. (image credit: Clinton Library)

Another place where the Briefing Document seemed to have some impact was in Chile, where I personally gave a copy in the late '90s to the former head of the Chilean Air Force, Gen. (Ret.) Ramón Vega, who was then a senator. Gen. Vega was amassing evidence to convince the Chilean government to open its own official UFO investigation, thus the timing was very good. Eventually, in late 1998, the government did launch its own official group known as CEFAA (Committee for the Study of Aerial Anomalous Phenomena), which is attached to Chile's Civil Aviation agency DGAC and led by Chilean Air Force Gen. (Ret.) Ricardo Bermúdez. (Gen. Bermúdez was one of the contributors in Leslie Kean's recent book *UFOs – Generals, Pilots, and Government Officials Go On the Record*.)

In 2000, the UFO Briefing Document finally became available commercially as a paperback published by Dell as part of a series of paranormal books called "Whitley Strieber's Hidden Agendas." The document was essentially the same, except for an Introduction written by Strieber. Around that time, the contents of the book were also posted on the web by Joe Firmage, a computer businessman who had taken an active role in ufology through a group called the International Space Sciences Organization. Firmage's ventures collapsed in the cyber-crash of the late '90s, but the Briefing Document was preserved through TheWayBackMachine and posted by a Spanish site called [biobliotecapleyades.net](http://biobliotecapleyades.net), which has a huge number of obscure books and reports. The format, however, is divided by sections, so you have to consult each Case History or other segments individually. It is for this reason that Open Minds, with the permission of the UFO Research Coalition members, decided to post the UFO Briefing Document as a single pdf file easy to download and consult. We are thus proud to bring this important document back to the forefront.

---

#### **About the Author**

Open Minds Investigative Reporter J. Antonio Huneus has covered the UFO field from an international perspective for over 30 years. His articles have appeared in dozens of publications in the U.S., Latin America, Europe and Japan. He was also the co-author of the Laurance Rockefeller-funded "UFO Briefing Document – The Best Available Evidence" and edited the book "A Study Guide to UFOs, Psychic & Paranormal Phenomena in the USSR." Huneus studied French at the Sorbonne University in Paris and Journalism at the University of Chile in Santiago in the 1970s. He has lectured at dozens of UFO Conferences all over the world and been interviewed by many media outlets including The Washington Post, the Sy-Fy and History Channels, Nippon-TV, etc. He received the "Ufologist of the Year" award at the National UFO Conference in Miami Beach in 1990 and the "Courage in Journalism" award at the X-Conference in Gaithersburg, Maryland, in 2007.

