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FOR DEFENCE FOR THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

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Your letter of 6th November to Geoffrey Johnson-Smith has been passed to me for reply since this is a matter for my Department. You enclosed a letter from Mr J. Hennessey of 57 Pont Street, London, SW1 about an object filmed by an ATV camera crew at Enstone. Mr Hennessey also wrote to the Prime Minister and to Peter Carrington about the Ministry of Defence role in the field of research into unidentified flying objects and I am taking this opportunity of replying, through you, to these other letters, in addition to the one sent to you.

To deal first with Mr Hennessey's enquiry about the object filmed at Enstone, a recording of the colour film was viewed many times and closely examined by two officers of the Ministry of Defence, who concluded that the sequence shown was consistent with an aircraft emitting a condensation trail or dumping fuel. F.111 aircraft from RAF Upper Heyford were operating in the area at the time.

Turning now to Mr Hennessey's other letters, he has questioned the Department's policy in handling UFO problems in respect of the depth and nature of our examination of reported sightings, the nature of our explanations, the availability of our records for research purposes and the absence of Ministry of Defence investigations into the scientific implications of these phenomena. Mr Hennessey is aware that the Ministry of Defence investigates and keeps records of UFO sightings because of their possible air defence implications. There has, as yet, been no evidence to suggest that UFOs represent an air defence threat to the United Kingdom. As regards our examination of UFO reports, once it is clear that there are no defence implications any further assessments are based exclusively on information readily correlating the UFO sighting report with a natural or manufactured object such as a star, planet, space junk,

/balloons

Julian Ridsdale, Esq, MP,
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