The Right to Know

A Governing Case for Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena and Non-Human Intelligence Disclosure

By Kevin Wright

Executive Summary

The U.S. government has placed a matter of extraordinary public significance beyond public knowledge and constitutional oversight. For more than eighty years, executive branch agencies, often in coordination with private defense contractors, have concealed information about unidentified anomalous phenomena (UAP) and non-human intelligence (NHI) from the scientific community, the American public, and the elected representatives charged with governing on their behalf.

The evidentiary record supporting this conclusion is substantial and continues to grow. It includes statutory enactments in which Congress has written the terms "non-human intelligence," "unidentified anomalous phenomena," and "technologies of unknown origin" into federal law. It includes a formal determination by the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community that whistleblower allegations of concealed UAP retrieval and reverse-engineering programs are credible and urgent under the applicable statutory standard. It includes sworn congressional testimony from credentialed officials who testified under their own names that such programs exist and have operated outside lawful oversight. It includes on-the-record statements by named former defense and intelligence officials confirming the existence of UAP and NHI. And it includes a declassified documentary record, produced by the government itself, establishing that the phenomena were internally assessed as real and unexplained during the same decades they were publicly dismissed, and that the public dismissal was deliberately constructed.

This paper does not claim to know the origin, nature, or intent of the phenomena. It does not claim that every allegation in the public record has been resolved. What the record establishes, and what this paper argues

obligates congressional action regardless of where any individual reader lands on the underlying questions, is that credible allegations of programs operating beyond statutory notification requirements have been formally transmitted to Congress and remain unresolved; that a classification regime has denied information to the public and to cleared members of Congress; that blanket concealment policies have been adopted in writing; and that the executive branch is now conducting disclosure at its own discretion, through the very agencies whose conduct is in question.

The secrecy regime surrounding the truth about UAP and NHI is a failure of the constitutional order. This paper presents the governing case for correcting it.

The Case for Disclosure

The case for disclosure rests on four independent grounds, each sufficient on its own.

Democratic Principle. The Right to Know is foundational to self-governance. Citizens cannot judge policy, check abuses, or hold officials accountable if information of civilizational significance is withheld without compelling justification. The classification system's "need to know" doctrine, designed for operational compartmentalization, has been extended to suppress entire domains of scientific knowledge, potentially including breakthroughs in energy, propulsion, and materials science. The public's need to know about such discoveries is superior to the classification preferences of the agencies and contractors that control them.

Public Interest. Civil liberties have been violated through the surveillance of civilian researchers and the systematic stigmatization of witnesses. Public trust has eroded to historic lows. A substantial population of experiencers (individuals

who have had direct encounters with the phenomenon) has been denied appropriate healthcare, legal protection, and institutional recognition. These are ongoing governance failures with documented consequences for real people.

State Interest. A classification regime that prevents coordinated analysis, denies senior officials access to critical information, suppresses scientific progress, strains alliances, and increases the risk of miscalculation weakens national security. Transparency and security reinforce each other when disclosure is managed through competent institutional frameworks.

Practical Necessity. The convergence of unauthorized leak risks, foreign government disclosure incentives, AI-driven analytical capabilities proliferating beyond government control, undeniable public event probabilities, and executive-directed document releases conducted without institutional architecture is compressing the timeline for uncontrolled revelation. The window for managed disclosure is narrowing.

What Disclosure Requires

Disclosure must be understood comprehensively, not as a document release, but as a transformation in governing posture and, ultimately, in humanity's understanding of itself and its place in a larger reality, encompassing four dimensions.

Information: the presumptive release of all UAP- and NHI-related records, including sensor data, testimony, program documentation, and any materials held by government agencies and departments and by private contractors.

Historical Reckoning: an honest institutional accounting of how the secrecy regime was constructed and maintained, encompassing the full scope of conduct undertaken in the name of secrecy, including any actions that caused direct harm to individuals.

Reconciliation: a framework that distinguishes among distinct populations: those bound by secrecy obligations who committed no wrongdoing and need only release and protection to speak; those who participated under institutional direction and need assurance that good-faith cooperation will be recognized; and those whose conduct may require formal legal evaluation. Individuals who have already come forward at personal risk should be the first to receive release from secrecy obligations and meaningful institutional protection. The process cannot predetermine outcomes, but it must be designed to maximize the recovery of truth while treating individuals fairly.

Structural Reform: changes to classification authorities, oversight mechanisms, whistleblower protections, and the government-contractor relationship to prevent a comparable failure of democratic governance from recurring.

A disclosure process that addresses some of these dimensions while ignoring others will be incomplete.

Why Executive Action Alone Is Insufficient

The Presidential Unsealing and Reporting System for UAP Encounters (PURSUE) program, launched by the Department of War in May 2026 at presidential direction, has demonstrated in real time what transparency looks like without institutional architecture. The Department released files without independent review, scientific analysis, whistleblower protections, or a managed disclosure

plan. The result has been data without context, an impression of openness while the most consequential questions remain unaddressed.

The establishment of the UAP Governance Board and Science Advisory Council in June 2026, while potentially well-intentioned, does not resolve this limitation. The Governance Board is composed of the agencies and departments at issue. Its membership is not public. The Science Advisory Council's access to classified material is granted by those same agencies rather than guaranteed by statute. An entity cannot supply independent review of itself, and advisory bodies whose access depends on the discretion of the institutions under scrutiny cannot substitute for the independent, Senate-confirmed authority that statutory reform would provide.

Presidential directives are revocable, non-binding on successor administrations, and depend on the cooperation of the very agencies under scrutiny. Only legislation can create the institutional architecture that genuine disclosure demands.

Recommendation

This paper recommends the passage of the Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena Disclosure Act (UAPDA), first introduced with bipartisan sponsorship in 2023 and modeled on the President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992.

The UAPDA would establish an independent, presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed UAP Records Review Board empowered with the authority to access all UAP-related records and materials across government agencies and private contractors; to compel testimony through subpoena; to override classification claims that cannot meet a clear and convincing harm standard; to develop a

"Controlled Disclosure Campaign Plan" with enforceable timelines and mandatory periodic review; and to exercise eminent domain over recovered technologies and biological evidence held outside government custody. Congress has introduced the UAPDA in four consecutive Sessions and blocked it three times, without ever defeating it on its merits.

The UAPDA does not address every dimension of the disclosure challenge. Reconciliation, enhanced whistleblower protections tailored to the UAP context, and structural reforms merit complementary legislative action. But the UAPDA is the essential first step, the mechanism that creates the independent institutional capacity without which none of these broader objectives can be achieved.

The Central Question

The evidentiary record outlined in this paper supports a plain conclusion: non-human intelligence exists, the U.S. government has known of it, and it has withheld that knowledge. Readers may weigh the evidence and stop short of that conclusion. But the constitutional failure the record documents, including programs beyond congressional reach, classification regimes denying access to cleared oversight officials, blanket concealment policies adopted in writing, and disclosure conducted at executive discretion through the entities in question, obligates legislative action regardless.

The Right to Know is not a request. It is the foundational compact between a democratic government and the people it serves. The provisions that would honor it should be enacted into law.

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I. The Record

The evidentiary record regarding unidentified anomalous phenomena (UAP), or what has historically been referred to as unidentified flying objects (UFOs), and non-human intelligences (NHI), on which this paper rests, did not emerge from speculation, anonymous sourcing, or cultural folklore. Instead, though it is by no means comprehensive, it encompasses nearly eight decades of statutory enactments, official government acknowledgments, sworn congressional testimony, on-the-record statements by named former officials, and a declassified documentary record the government itself produced and, in many cases, tried to suppress.

Not all evidence carries equal weight, and this paper does not present it as though it does. What follows is organized by category, each carrying a different kind of authority. No single item below is dispositive. Instead, the argument rests on what the evidence together establishes.

Statutory Enactments and Official Acknowledgments

The strongest evidence is the government's own conduct. The U.S. Congress has written the terms "unidentified anomalous phenomena," "non-human intelligence," and "technologies of unknown origin" (TUO) into federal law, defining each in statutory text.[1] Whatever one concludes about the phenomena, Congress has determined that these categories require legal definition and statutory treatment.

[1] U.S. Congress. National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024. Public Law No. 118-31, H.R. 2670, 118th Cong. December 22, 2023. See Subtitle C, Sections 1841–1843 (Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena)

In June 2021, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) issued a preliminary assessment, acknowledging for the first time that UAP are real physical phenomena, that most reported incidents could not be explained, and that some demonstrated flight characteristics its analysts could not account for.[2] The ODNI's 2022 annual report analyzed 510 cases and resolved fewer than half as conventional objects.[3]

In 2022, Congress established the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO) within the Department of Defense, mandating that it investigate contemporary UAP incidents and produce a comprehensive historical record of U.S. government involvement with UAP, including any efforts to obfuscate, manipulate public opinion, or conceal information.[4] The scope of that mandate reflects congressional concern not merely that the phenomena warrant investigation but that the investigation itself may have been compromised by institutional resistance to transparency.

In April 2020, the Office of Naval Intelligence produced a UAP Security Classification Guide for the UAP Task Force that categorically prohibited the release of any UAP-related imagery, without regard to whether specific material posed any identifiable risk.[5] Blanket prohibition is not a case-by-case security judgment. Rather, it is a written policy of concealment.

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[2] Preliminary Assessment: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena. Office of the Director of National Intelligence. June 25, 2021.
[3] 2022 Annual Report on Unidentified Aerial Phenomena. Office of the Director of National Intelligence. January 12, 2023.
[4] Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence & Security. Establishment of the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO), Memorandum, U.S. Department of Defense, July 20, 2022; Note, the ''James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023'' (NDAA) established the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO). U.S. Congress. James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023. Public Law No. 117-263, H.R. 7776, 117th Cong. December 23, 2022.
[5] U.S. Department of Defense, Unidentified Aerial Phenomenon Task Force. Unidentified Aerial Phenomenon (UAP) Security Classification Guide, SCG ID# 04-030 (April 16, 2020).

And on May 8, 2026, the Department of War began publishing UAP records through the Presidential Unsealing and Reporting System for UAP Encounters (PURSUE), at presidential direction, with no independent body to verify the completeness or authenticity of what was released.[6]

Testimony Under Oath

In May 2022, retired U.S. Air Force Intelligence Officer David Grusch filed a whistleblower complaint with the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community alleging that programs involving the recovery of craft of non-human origin had operated outside congressional notification requirements. The Inspector General determined the complaint credible and urgent under the applicable statutory standard, which required its transmission to the congressional oversight committees.[7] That determination was a threshold finding that the allegations were not frivolous and warranted congressional attention. It was not an adjudication that the underlying allegations were true, but it is significant precisely because it is the mechanism Congress designed for exactly this circumstance and it functioned.

In July 2023, Grusch testified under oath before the House Oversight Committee that dozens of individuals with direct program knowledge had informed him that the U.S. government possesses craft and biological material of non-human origin. He provided the Inspector General with the names of those individuals.[8] His testimony is sworn and firsthand as to what he was told; it is secondhand as to the underlying facts, and this paper treats it as such.

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[6] U.S. Department of War, "Presidential Unsealing and Reporting System for UAP Encounters (PURSUE)," Release 01, cleared for release May 8, 2026.
[7] "The Intelligence Community Inspector General found his complaint 'credible and urgent' in July 2022." Kean, Leslie and Blumenthal, Ralph. "Intelligence Officials Say U.S. Has Retrieved Craft of Non-Human Origin." *The Debrief*, June 5, 2023.
[8] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Oversight and Accountability. Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena: Implications on National Security, Public Safety, and Government Transparency. 118th Congress, 1st session, July 26, 2023. Testimony of David Grusch.

At the same hearing, former U.S. Navy pilot Ryan Graves testified that the vast majority of pilot sightings go unreported because aviators fear professional consequences, and that "the stigma attached to UAP is real and powerful and challenges national security."[9] Commander David Fravor testified to the 2004 USS Nimitz encounter, corroborated by radar returns, infrared video, and multiple trained observers.[10]

In November 2024, Luis "Lue" Elizondo, a former senior leader of the Pentagon's Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program (AATIP), testified under oath before Congress that UAP are real and affirmed that the U.S. has conducted crash-retrieval programs seeking to identify and reverse-engineer craft of non-human origin. He stated under oath: "I believe we are in the midst of a multi-decade, secretive arms race — one funded by misallocated taxpayer dollars and hidden from our elected representatives and oversight bodies."[11]

Statements by Named Former Officials

Below sworn testimony, but well above anonymous sourcing, sit on-the-record statements by identified individuals whose government positions are a matter of public record and who bear professional and reputational exposure for what they say.

In May 2024, retired U.S. Army Colonel Karl Nell, formerly of the Department of Defense's Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Task Force, stated publicly that there

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[9] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Oversight and Accountability. Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena: Implications on National Security, Public Safety, and Government Transparency. 118th Congress, 1st session, July 26, 2023. Testimony of Ryan Graves.
[10] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Oversight and Accountability. Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena: Implications on National Security, Public Safety, and Government Transparency. 118th Congress, 1st session, July 26, 2023. Testimony of David Fravor.
[11] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Oversight and Accountability. Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena: Exposing the Truth. 118th Cong., 2nd Sess., Nov. 13, 2024. Testimony of Luis Elizondo

is "zero doubt" that non-human intelligence exists, that it has interacted with humanity, and that unelected officials within the government are aware of it.[12] In 2025, astrophysicist Dr. Eric Davis informed members of Congress that the U.S. government and aerospace defense contractors have retrieved UAP.[13] Before his congressional testimony, Elizondo wrote in his book *Imminent* that NHI exists and that their craft is "not made by humans."[14]

None of these individuals is anonymous. Each held a documented government or contractor position, each spoke under his own name, and each accepted professional and reputational consequences for doing so. What they assert has not been adjudicated, but that they asserted it, on the record, is not in dispute.

The Documentary Record

The historical record establishes, in the government's own contemporaneous words, that the phenomena were internally assessed as real and unexplained during the same period they were publicly dismissed, and that the public dismissal was deliberately constructed.

September 1947. U.S. Air Force Lieutenant General Nathan F. Twining, head of Air Materiel Command, wrote a classified assessment for Pentagon intelligence stating that the reported phenomena were "real and not visionary or fictitious." He cataloged recurring characteristics across reports, including metallic surfaces, circular profiles, silent operation, absence of exhaust, and evasive maneuverability, and concluded that the objects appeared to be under

[12] Karl Nell, interview by Alex Klokus, "'Zero Doubt' Non-Human Intelligence on Earth – Col. Karl Nell & Alex Klokus," *SALT iConnections New York 2024*, recorded May 21, 2024, YouTube video, posted by SALT, May 22, 2024.
[13] Statement by Dr. Eric Davis, PhD. Understanding UAP: Science, National Security & Innovation. UAP Disclosure Fund. Sponsored by the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. May 1, 2025.
[14] Elizondo, Luis. "Imminent: Inside the Pentagon's Hunt for UFOs: Former Head of the Department of Defense's Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program." HarperCollins. 2024.

intelligent control and did not correspond to any known or classified U.S. program. He recommended formalizing and expanding the inquiry.[15]

1948–1949. Twining's recommendation produced Project SIGN, the Air Force's first dedicated investigation. Investigators reportedly produced an internal "Estimate of the Situation" concluding that a subset of cases resisted conventional explanation and might indicate non-terrestrial origin. The Chief of Staff rejected the estimate and ordered it destroyed. The document did not survive; rather, the account rests on the 1956 memoir of Captain Edward J. Ruppelt, who later directed the successor program.[16] This paper treats it as secondhand. What it documents is what followed: Project GRUDGE, whose operating posture shifted from analysis toward normalizing and debunking reports.[17]

January 1949. An FBI memorandum from the San Antonio field office to Director J. Edgar Hoover, titled "Protection of Vital Installations," documented repeated incursions of unidentified objects over Los Alamos and Oak Ridge, two of the most sensitive nuclear facilities in the U.S. Army and Air Force intelligence treated the matter as Top Secret. The memo set out technical reasons the objects could not be meteors, including horizontal flight paths, controlled maneuvers, repetition, and concentration over strategic sites, and acknowledged that no known technology accounted for the observed

[15] Twining, Nathan F. "AMC Opinion Concerning 'Flying Discs.'" Memorandum for Commanding General, AKA "Twining Memo." Army Air Forces, September 23, 1947.
[16] "[T]he Top Secret Estimate of the Situation was working its way up into the higher echelons of the Air Force. It got to the late General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, then Chief of Staff, before it was batted back down. The general wouldn't buy interplanetary vehicles. The report lacked proof. A group from ATIC went to the Pentagon to bolster their position but had no luck, the Chief of Staff just couldn't be convinced. The estimate died a quick death. Some months later it was completely declassified and relegated to the incinerator." Ruppelt, Edward J. "The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects." Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1956.
[17] U.S. Air Force. Project GRUDGE. Air Force investigation records. 1949–1951. Defense Technical Information Center.

behavior. It was written while the Air Force's public posture emphasized reassurance.[18]

December 1952. H. Marshall Chadwell, the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) Assistant Director for Scientific Intelligence, advised Director Walter Bedell Smith that sightings near defense installations could not be attributed to natural phenomena or known aircraft, and that the matter warranted National Security Council attention and a community-wide intelligence effort. In the same memorandum, he raised the risk of public reaction and the need for a policy governing what should be disclosed. In other words, the Chadwell memo acknowledges that the phenomenon was real and unexplained, and recommends that its handling be governed by information control.[19]

January 1953. Six weeks later, the CIA convened the Robertson Panel, which concluded that the phenomena presented less of a scientific problem than a psychological and social one. Rather than expanded research, the panel recommended a program of training and debunking, to be carried out through mass media including television, film, and popular articles. It recommended monitoring civilian research organizations.[20] The stigma that has attached to this subject for seven decades is not an accident of culture. It was a policy recommendation, adopted in writing, by the CIA.

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[18] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation. Protection of Vital Installations. Memorandum from Special Agent in Charge, San Antonio, to Director J. Edgar Hoover. January 31, 1949. National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena.

[19] Central Intelligence Agency. Unidentified Flying Objects. Memorandum from H. Marshall Chadwell to Director Walter Bedell Smith. December 2, 1952. CIA FOIA Electronic Reading Room.

[20] "The Panel's concept of a borad [sic] educational program integrating efforts of all concerned agencies was that it should have two major aims: training and 'debunking'…The 'debunking' aim would result in reduction in public interest in 'flying saucers' which evoke a strong psychological reaction. This education could be accomplished by mass media such as television, motion pictures, and popular articles." Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). "Report of the Scientific Advisory Panel on Unidentified Flying Objects (Robertson Panel Report)." February 16, 1953.

The significance of these selected documents from decades ago is not that any one of them proves what the phenomena are. No known single document does. It is that the internal record and the public record diverged from the beginning, in the 1940s, and that the divergence was deliberate, documented, and directed from the most senior levels of the Intelligence Community.

What This Record Does Not Establish

Intellectual honesty about the limits of the evidence is a condition of being credited on the rest of it. Therefore, this record does not establish the origin, nature, or intent of the phenomena. It does not establish where they come from, what they are, or whether the intelligence behind them is even comprehensible in human terms.

Nor does the record, standing alone, prove that the U.S. holds recovered craft or biological material. That claim rests on sworn but secondhand testimony, corroborated by named former officials but not yet verified by any document or object placed in public view. However, it is a serious allegation that has been found credible enough to warrant congressional attention.

What This Record Does Establish

Taken together, and across nearly eight decades of accumulation, this record supports a conclusion that this paper states plainly: non-human intelligence exists, the U.S. government has possessed knowledge of it, and this knowledge has been withheld from the public, the scientific community, and the elected representatives constitutionally charged with oversight.

Readers may weigh the same evidence and stop short of that conclusion. What the record establishes regardless (and what obligates Congress irrespective of where any individual reader lands) is narrower and harder to dispute. Credible

allegations that programs operated beyond statutory notification requirements have been formally transmitted to Congress and remain unresolved. A classification regime has denied information to cleared members of Congress. Blanket concealment policies have been adopted in writing. The executive branch is now conducting some form of disclosure at its discretion, on its own timeline, through the agencies whose conduct is in question.

What is described, therefore, is a failure of constitutional oversight and infringes on the public's right to know. It is the subject of the remainder of this paper.

The case for correcting this failure rests on four independent grounds, each sufficient on its own: democratic principle, the foundational right of citizens to information necessary for self-governance; public interest, encompassing civil liberties, institutional trust, social cohesion, and public health; state interest, including national security, technological competitiveness, alliance management, governmental continuity, and crisis stability; and practical necessity, as the convergence of artificial intelligence, sensor proliferation, and the growing risk of uncontrolled revelation erodes the government's capacity to sustain secrecy.

The Right to Know is not a slogan. It is a basic condition of self-governance. Citizens cannot judge policy, check abuses, or hold officials accountable if information of this magnitude is withheld without compelling justification. When what is withheld concerns the existence of non-human intelligence, technologies that may reshape entire fields of science and industry, and programs that have operated outside constitutional oversight for decades, the case for transparency is not merely strong; it is overwhelming.

The paper then defines what meaningful disclosure requires, addresses the experiencer population and the governance and public health questions it raises, sets out a framework for managed transparency grounded in the UAP Disclosure Act (UAPDA), and closes by confronting the principal arguments for continued concealment.

The central question is no longer whether disclosure should occur. It is whether disclosure proceeds in a manner that strengthens society, or tears it apart.

II. The Right to Know as a Democratic Principle

The Right to Know is foundational to the American constitutional order. The architects of our Republic understood, and explicitly stated, that self-governance cannot function without an informed citizenry.

Thomas Jefferson, in a letter dated January 6, 1816, wrote: "If a nation expects to be ignorant & free, in a state of civilisation, it expects what never was & never will be. The functionaries of every government have propensities to command at will the liberty & property of their constituents. There is no safe deposit for these but with the people themselves; nor can they be safe with them without information."[21] James Madison reinforced the point: "A popular Government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy; or, perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance: And a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives."[22]

These were not rhetorical flourishes; they described the operating condition of republican government: citizens must have access to information about what their government is doing, or accountability mechanisms such as elections, oversight, and public deliberation become hollow exercises. The First Amendment's protections of speech and press implicitly recognize this necessity, ensuring that information can flow between citizens and their government without interference. This foundational principle is not confined to

[21] Jefferson, Thomas. Letter to Charles Yancey. *Founders Online*, National Archives, January 6, 1816.
[22] "James Madison (1751-1836)." Library of Virginia. Accessed January 12, 2026.

American law. In 1946, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 59, declaring that "freedom of information is a fundamental human right and is the touchstone of all the freedoms to which the United Nations is consecrated."[23] The U.S. supported this resolution, affirming that access to information, including government-held information, is an essential condition of democratic governance.

Many times in the past, we've upheld this imperative. Congress, for example, has repeatedly acted on this principle when the executive branch failed to do so. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), enacted in 1966, was a direct response to the executive branch's systematic misuse of the Administrative Procedure Act of 1946 to withhold rather than disclose public records. Congress found that despite the statutory language "clearly intended" to ensure public access, "improper denials" of records had occurred "again and again." As a result, it passed FOIA as a "true Federal public records statute" to "protect the right of the public to information."[24] Yet nearly six decades later, FOIA has proved inadequate to the UAP challenge. The executive branch has wielded the Act's national security exemptions to deny virtually all UAP-related requests, transforming a transparency statute into what Congress itself warned against in 1966: a shield for secrecy rather than a tool for accountability.

The principle that classification cannot be permanent is equally well established. The most sensitive operations in American history, such as World War II cryptography, the Manhattan Project, Cold War espionage, and classified diplomacy, have all been subject to systematic declassification through a

[23] United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 59 (I). "Calling of an International Conference on Freedom of Information." UN Digital Library, December 14, 1946.
[24] U.S. House of Representatives. "Clarifying and Protecting the Right of the Public to Information." H. Rept. No. 1497, 89th Cong., 2nd Sess., May 9, 1966. National Security Archive, George Washington University.

structured review process. These precedents confirm that secrecy may serve legitimate purposes during periods of operational sensitivity, but it is not a license for permanent concealment. Classification exists to temporarily protect assets, information, and personnel, not to shield government activities from democratic accountability indefinitely.

The UAP secrecy regime has exacerbated this problem by misapplying the "need to know" principle. Within the classification system, need to know operates as an additional access restriction beyond clearance levels themselves, limiting information to individuals whose specific duties require it. As originally conceived, this is a reasonable operational security measure. But when such limitations are applied not to discrete tactical details but to entire domains of scientific knowledge (potentially including breakthroughs in energy generation, propulsion, and materials science), it ceases to function as a security tool. It becomes a mechanism for controlling what the public is permitted to understand about the physical world. The full implications of this misapplication, and the public's own compelling need to know, are examined in detail in Section IV.

Applied to UAP and NHI, these principles carry extraordinary force. If the evidentiary record outlined in this paper is accurate, if the U.S. government has possessed knowledge of non-human intelligence, recovered technologies of unknown origin, and operated programs outside constitutional oversight for decades, then the Right to Know has not merely been neglected. It has been systematically denied on a matter of civilizational significance, to the public and the authorities it has delegated to the elected representatives constitutionally charged with oversight.

The question this raises is not simply one of excessive secrecy. It is whether constitutional self-government can survive the permanent, unaccountable withholding of information that belongs to the American people. The sections that follow examine what that withholding has cost in public trust, scientific progress, national security, and human welfare.

III. Public Interests

The public interests served by UAP and NHI disclosure extend well beyond curiosity. They encompass four distinct but interconnected dimensions of democratic life: civil liberties, institutional trust, social cohesion, and public health. Each constitutes an independent justification for transparency. Together, they establish that continued secrecy imposes concrete costs on individuals, communities, and institutions.

The UAP secrecy regime directly impacts civil liberties. From the outset, the government's approach to UAP has involved not merely withholding information but actively suppressing public inquiry. In 1953, the CIA-convened Robertson Panel recommended that civilian UAP research organizations be monitored for their potential influence on public opinion and their susceptibility to subversive exploitation. The panel further recommended a public "debunking" campaign using mass media to reduce interest in the phenomenon.[25] These were not simple decisions about what to keep secret for national security; they were affirmative steps to surveil constitutionally protected civilian activity and manipulate public discourse on a matter of legitimate concern. These actions ultimately led to a culture of stigma and ridicule around the UAP subject that's lasted generations.

The legacy of that posture persists. Military personnel, commercial pilots, and civilians who report UAP encounters continue to face professional retaliation, stigmatization, and institutional dismissal. As Graves testified before Congress in

[25] Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). "Report of the Scientific Advisory Panel on Unidentified Flying Objects (Robertson Panel Report)." February 16, 1953.

July 2023, the stigma is itself a national security problem.[26] When reporting what one has witnessed carries career-ending consequences, real threats to our national safety are ignored. This is a recipe for strategic surprise, one that could very easily be remedied. Disclosure, for example, would establish clear protections for witnesses and experiencers, replacing a system that punishes honesty with one that enables it.

Restoring institutional trust is a second critical interest. Decades of denial, selective disclosure, and what multiple credible officials have described as active disinformation campaigns have severely damaged public confidence in the government's willingness to be truthful about UAP. This erosion extends beyond the UAP issue itself. When citizens conclude that their government has systematically concealed information of profound significance and done so while publicly ridiculing those who sought answers, the resulting distrust contaminates the broader relationship between the governed and their institutions. The UAP issue has therefore become emblematic of government secrecy more broadly. Pursuing transparent, accountable disclosure gives the federal government an opportunity to show that democratic institutions can self-correct. At a time when public trust in government stands at historic lows, such a demonstration is urgently needed.

The scale of that erosion is measurable in this specific issue. A June 2026 *CBS News/YouGov* poll found that 84% of Americans believe the government knows more about UAP than it is disclosing; a view held almost identically across party lines, at 85% of Democrats, 85% of independents, and 83% of Republicans.[27] In

[26] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Oversight and Accountability. Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena: Implications on National Security, Public Safety, and Government Transparency. 118th Congress, 1st session, July 26, 2023. Testimony of Ryan Graves.
[27] De Pinto, Jennifer et al. "CBS News Poll Finds Most Americans Believe Extraterrestrial Life Exists — and Some Think it's Already Here." *CBS News/YouGov*, June 11, 2026 (survey of 2,023 U.S. adults, June 2–4, 2026; margin of error ±2.8 points; see Q12 and party crosstabs). In a parallel finding, a

an environment where few propositions command agreement across the political spectrum, this one does. That is not fringe suspicion. It is a mainstream, bipartisan judgment that the public is not being told the truth, and any disclosure framework would have to repair it.

Social cohesion is a third public interest directly affected by the information vacuum surrounding UAP. When official sources refuse to provide credible information, citizens turn to alternative sources that may lack credibility or actively promote divisive narratives. Research has established that conspiracy theories thrive in environments defined by uncertainty and institutional silence, and that they corrode social trust and cooperation.[28] The UAP issue has become increasingly polarized, with some viewing it as evidence of government malfeasance and others dismissing all discussion as pseudoscience. Both positions respond to the same underlying condition: a lack of authoritative, transparent information. A managed disclosure process would provide a common factual foundation for public discourse, narrowing the space for harmful speculation and enabling society to engage with the implications of UAP and NHI constructively rather than through fragmented, competing narratives.

Public health is a fourth, systematically neglected public interest. Individuals who have had direct encounters with UAP report a range of physical and psychological effects, from radiation-consistent injuries documented by the Defense Intelligence Agency[29] to profound psychological impacts, including

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June 2026 survey conducted by F'inn and commissioned by the Disclosure Foundation — "Public Sentiment on UAP Transparency," fielded June 5–9, 2026 (n = 303 U.S. adults) — found that 84% of respondents want the government to release more information about UAP.

[28] Douglas, Karen M., et al. "Understanding Conspiracy Theories." *Political Psychology*, Vol. 40, (2019): 3-35.

[29] Defense Intelligence Reference Document. Anomalous Acute and Subacute Field Effects on Human Biological Tissues. Defense Intelligence Agency, March 11, 2010, prepared under the Advanced Aerospace Weapon System Applications (AAWSA) Program (AAWSAP).

trauma from what clinicians describe as ontological shock, or the disorientation that occurs when an experience fundamentally challenges one's understanding of reality.

Survey data indicate that approximately 10% of American adults report having personally witnessed a UAP.[30] Yet, the vast majority never report their encounters due to stigma, and healthcare professionals lack established protocols for treating UAP-related conditions. The absence of official acknowledgment leaves this substantial population without appropriate medical support, clinical guidance, or institutional recognition of the reality of their experiences and the legitimacy of their needs. Section VI examines the governance and clinical dimensions of the experiencer population in detail. For purposes of this section, the essential point is that disclosure is a precondition for addressing a public health problem that currently has no institutional home.

Taken together, these four interests establish that disclosure is not a peripheral concern or a concession to public curiosity. It bears directly on the protection of constitutional rights, the integrity of democratic institutions, the health of public discourse, and the welfare of a substantial population whose needs have been ignored. No credible governing framework can dismiss these concerns as secondary to bureaucratic convenience or institutional self-protection.

[30] Ipsos. "Many Americans Believe in the Supernatural, UFOs." *Ipsos Public Affairs*. July 24, 2023.

IV. State Interests

The case for disclosure does not rest solely on democratic principles or public interests, despite the obvious strengths of these concerns. It is equally compelling when examined through the lens of state interests. Properly managed, disclosure strengthens national security, accelerates technological development, reinforces alliances, preserves governmental continuity, and improves crisis stability. Given the state of play in global politics, these outcomes are strategic imperatives that the current secrecy regime actively undermines.

National Security Resilience

The prevailing assumption that secrecy around UAP and NHI protects national security inverts the actual risk. When information is compartmentalized to the point that senior government officials, military commanders, and properly cleared members of Congress are denied access, the result is not enhanced security but institutional blindness.

The ODNI acknowledged in its 2021 Preliminary Assessment that UAP pose potential challenges to national security,[31] yet the extreme compartmentalization of UAP-related programs has prevented the coordinated, cross-agency analysis that genuine security threats demand.

Whistleblower testimony before Congress has alleged that UAP-related programs have operated outside lawful oversight channels,[32] meaning the

[31] Preliminary Assessment: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena. Office of the Director of National Intelligence. June 25, 2021.

[32] "I believe we are in the midst of a multi-decade, secretive arms race -- one funded by misallocated taxpayer dollars and hidden from our elected representatives and oversight bodies." U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Oversight and Accountability. Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena: Exposing the Truth. 118th Congress, 2nd session, November 13, 2024. Testimony of Luis Elizondo, 17-18.

programs most relevant to national security may be the least subject to the scrutiny that effective security requires.

A more transparent approach, one that widens the analytical base while maintaining appropriate protections for genuinely sensitive sources and methods, would produce better threat assessment, more robust institutional responses, and stronger democratic accountability over the programs themselves.

Technological Competitiveness and the Misapplication of Need to Know

The UAP evidentiary record points to technologies involving propulsion systems, energy generation, and materials science that operate according to physical principles not yet understood by publicly known conventional science. If the U.S. government and its private contractors have recovered and studied such technologies, as multiple credible officials have testified under oath, then the classification regime surrounding these programs raises a question that goes beyond transparency: whether the "need to know" principle[33] has been weaponized against not only the public interest, but also the state interest.

Need to know, as originally conceived within the classification system, is an operational security mechanism. It restricts access to classified information to

[33] Note, the need to know principle was first outlined to the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations by former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara in February 1968 during the Committee's investigation into the Vietnam war. McNamara testified: "There are a host of different clearances. I would guess I have perhaps 25. There are certain clearances to which only a handful of people in the Government are exposed. There are others with broader coverage, and overlapping coverage, and it is not really a question of degree of clearance. It is a question of need to know, and need to know clearances apply to certain forms of data." U.S. Congress, Senate, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. The Gulf of Tonkin, the 1964 Incidents. 90th Cong., 2nd Sess., Feb. 20, 1968, Testimony of Robert S. McNamara; Government Printing Office, February 1968.

individuals whose duties require it, even among those with appropriate clearance levels. Applied to tactical military details, the location of a covert operative, the specifications of a sensor platform, and the timing of a planned operation, it is a reasonable and necessary safeguard. But the UAP secrecy regime has extended the need to know principle far beyond its original purpose. It has been applied not to discrete operational details but to entire domains of scientific knowledge: energy generation and distribution systems that could represent cleaner alternatives to fossil fuels; propulsion technologies that could transform transportation and space exploration; materials science and manufacturing processes with applications across multiple industries; and fundamental physics that could reshape humanity's understanding of the natural world.

When the need to know is applied at this scale, it ceases to function as a security measure and becomes a mechanism for determining what the public is permitted to understand about the physical universe. The question is no longer who within the cleared community needs access to a specific program, but whether the American people need to know how recent discoveries may fundamentally change humanity's understanding of the universe.

The answer, measured against any reasonable standard of public welfare, is unambiguous. If technologies exist that could accelerate the transition away from carbon-based energy, reduce dependence on foreign energy supplies, revolutionize aerospace and transportation, or yield breakthroughs in medicine and manufacturing, the public's need to know about their existence is not subordinate to the classification preferences of the agencies and contractors that currently control them. It is superior to those preferences.

The National Research Council has concluded that excessive national security controls on science and technology can undermine both national security and innovation, noting the urgent need for fundamental policy changes to counteract the resulting harm.[34] The current arrangement, in which potentially paradigm-shifting knowledge is monopolized by compartmented government programs and private defense contractors operating beyond public oversight, as some whistleblowers have stated,[35] represents precisely the kind of structural failure the National Research Council warned against.

Disclosure, accompanied by appropriate declassification of technical information, would open these fields to the broader scientific and engineering communities whose expertise is essential to understanding and developing technologies that could serve national and global interests. History shows that scientific progress accelerates through open collaboration and peer review rather than isolated, secretive programs.

The Manhattan Project is often cited as an example of successful secret development, but it is worth noting that the underlying physics of nuclear fission was publicly known before the project began. The secrecy concerned engineering application, not fundamental science. If UAP-related technologies involve genuinely novel physics, the case for broad scientific engagement is even stronger.

Alliance Management

Military and civilian personnel across numerous allied nations have reported UAP, many of which conduct their own investigations. France operates GEIPAN,

[34] National Research Council. "'Beyond Fortress America:' National Security Controls on Science and Technology in a Globalized World." Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2009.
[35] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Oversight and Accountability. Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena: Implications on National Security, Public Safety, and Government Transparency. 118th Congress, 1st session, July 26, 2023. Testimony of David Grusch.

an official program that investigates and publicly reports on UAP incidents.[36] The United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence maintained a dedicated UAP investigation desk until 2009.[37] Japan's Ministry of Defense has issued protocols for Self-Defense Force personnel to report UAP encounters.[38] Despite these parallel efforts, the absence of systematic international coordination limits collaborative analysis and shared understanding.

In an era when alliance cohesion is essential to global security, the UAP issue presents both opportunities and risks. If allies perceive the U.S. as withholding significant information about a phenomenon they are independently investigating, the resulting friction could undermine trust in American leadership on broader security matters. A coordinated, multilateral approach to disclosure, potentially through existing alliance structures such as NATO or the Five Eyes intelligence partnership, would strengthen partnerships and enable more effective collective analysis.

Governmental Continuity

When UAP-related information is compartmentalized to the point that successive administrations, congressional leaders, and senior officials are denied access, it breaks down constitutional governance. Multiple former government officials have testified that UAP programs operate outside normal oversight channels, potentially violating laws requiring congressional notification.[39]

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[36] GEIPAN (Groupe d'Études et d'Informations sur les Phénomènes Aérospatiaux Non Identifiés). French National Centre for Space Studies (CNES).
[37] Allison, George. "UK sets out position on unidentified aerial phenomenon." *UK Defense Journal*. December 11, 2024.
[38] Johnson, Jesse. "Japanese Defense Ministry unveils protocol for encountering UFOs." The Japan Times. September 14, 2020.
[39] U.S. Congress, House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena: Implications on National Security, Public Safety, and Government Transparency, testimony of David Grusch; and Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena: Exposing the Truth, testimony of Luis Elizondo.

These arrangements directly challenge civilian control of the military and intelligence apparatus. Continuity of government traditionally means ensuring essential functions survive crises. It must also encompass continuity of knowledge. When small, compartmented groups hold critical information without proper documentation or transition protocols, vital knowledge can be lost, and policy decisions are made without full awareness of relevant facts. Disclosure, paired with proper documentation and archival practices, would ensure future leaders have access to the information needed for informed governance and that democratic accountability is preserved across administrations.

Crisis Stability

The UAP phenomenon creates tangible risks of miscalculation and escalation that managed disclosure would mitigate. The 2004 USS Nimitz incident, in which Navy pilots encountered objects demonstrating flight characteristics far beyond known human technology, occurred in a training area off the coast of California.[40] Had that encounter taken place near contested waters or during a period of international tension, the potential for a destabilizing military response would have been significantly higher.

Beyond the immediate military dimension, unmanaged disclosure through leaks, foreign government action, or undeniable public events could generate domestic instability, erode institutional credibility, and provide adversaries with opportunities to exploit confusion. Pursuing coherent, credible disclosure through established governmental channels reduces these risks by ensuring that authoritative information is available before, not after, a crisis forces the issue.

[40] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Oversight and Accountability. Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena: Implications on National Security, Public Safety, and Government Transparency. 118th Congress, 1st session, July 26, 2023. Testimony of David Fravor.

Taken together, these state interests demonstrate that transparency and national security are not competing values. They are mutually reinforcing when disclosure is managed through competent institutional frameworks. In opposition to stated goals, the current secrecy regime actively weakens the state's interests by fragmenting analysis, obstructing oversight, suppressing scientific progress, straining alliances, and increasing the risk that a future incident will be met with institutional paralysis rather than an informed response. The task then is to design a disclosure process that deliberately serves these interests, rather than sustaining a default concealment architecture that undermines them.

V. Defining Disclosure

"Disclosure" in the UAP and NHI context must mean more than a press conference, a document release, or another partial acknowledgment that tells the public almost nothing while preserving the underlying secrecy architecture. If the term is to carry real weight, it must encompass the full scope of what democratic governance requires: *comprehensive information* release, an honest *historical reckoning* with what occurred and why, a *reconciliation* process that creates conditions for cooperation and truth-telling, and *structural reforms* that prevent the same failures from recurring.

Anything less is not disclosure; it is merely a managed concession that remains unexplained, uncontextualized, and unaccountable.

The Information Dimension

At its foundation, disclosure begins with the principle of presumptive release. All government records concerning UAP, NHI, and TUO should carry a presumption of immediate public disclosure unless there exists clear and convincing evidence that specific, defined harms would result from release. This presumption fundamentally inverts the current paradigm, where secrecy reigns, and disclosure remains rare to nonexistent.

The scope of information subject to disclosure cannot be limited to paper records. It must include the full evidentiary record: sensor data, radar tracks, infrared and multispectral imagery, witness testimony, scientific and technical assessments, program documentation, and intelligence analyses. It must also include records relating to recovered materials, technologies, or biological evidence, while at the same time shielding genuine sources and methods.

The Department of War's UAP Security Classification Guide, produced in April 2020 by the Office of Naval Intelligence for the UAP Task Force, exemplifies the problem that disclosure must overcome. This interagency directive categorically prohibits releasing any UAP-related videos and images, regardless of whether the material constitutes a genuine threat to national security. [41] When classification is applied as a blanket policy rather than through case-by-case assessment of actual harm, it ceases to function as a security measure and becomes a tool for concealment and narrative control. Comprehensive disclosure requires reversing this presumption, with classification applied only where specific, demonstrable harms can be identified and documented.

Disclosure must also reach into the private sector. Credible testimony before Congress has alleged that materials, technologies, and biological evidence of non-human origin have been transferred to or recovered by private defense contractors, where they reside beyond the reach of statutory oversight.[42] These materials should not be excluded from the disclosure process merely because private entities, rather than government agencies, hold them. The principle is straightforward: information and materials of this significance belong under public stewardship, subject to democratic oversight, regardless of where they are currently housed.

The Historical Reckoning

Information release alone, however comprehensive, does not constitute full disclosure. The public has a fundamental right to know not only what has been

[41] U.S. Department of Defense, Unidentified Aerial Phenomenon Task Force. Unidentified Aerial Phenomenon (UAP) Security Classification Guide, SCG ID# 04-030 (April 16, 2020).
[42] "I was informed, in the course of my official duties, of a multi-decade UAP crash retrieval and reverse engineering program to which I was denied access to those additional read-on's." U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Oversight and Accountability. Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena: Implications on National Security, Public Safety, and Government Transparency. 118th Congress, 1st session, July 26, 2023. Testimony of David Grusch.

concealed but also how the concealment was sustained for more than eight decades, and under what justification. This requires an honest, detailed historical accounting; a reckoning with the systems, mechanisms, and decisions that enabled a secrecy regime of this scope and duration to persist across administrations and generations, in defiance of constitutional oversight and at the expense of public knowledge, and ultimately hold the government responsible as a whole for these failures.

That reckoning must address several dimensions, including, but not limited to:

1. How were classification authorities, including the Atomic Energy Act, the Invention Secrecy Act, and Special Access Program protocols, applied to UAP and NHI-related information, and were those applications consistent with their statutory purposes?
2. How did the "need to know" principle, examined in Section IV, evolve from an operational security tool into a mechanism for suppressing foundational scientific knowledge?
3. What role did disinformation campaigns,[43] including those documented from the Robertson Panel[44] through to the AARO's 2024 report,[45] play in shaping public and congressional understanding of the phenomenon?[46]

[43] Wright, Kevin. "Disinformation: The U.S. Government's Suppression of Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena and Advanced Science." New Paradigm Institute. May 20, 2025.
[44] Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). "Report of the Scientific Advisory Panel on Unidentified Flying Objects (Robertson Panel Report)." February 16, 1953.
[45] Mellon, Christopher. "The Pentagon's New UAP Report is Seriously Flawed." The Debrief, April 12, 2024.
[46] "A definite attempt was made during 1949 to use Project GRUDGE to destroy any acceptance of UFO's. The motives for this are not clear: possibly Air Force embarrassment at being incapable of controlling the situation and/or a fear of national panic prompted USAF to try and remove the problem by denying its existence. Another possible motive may have been to provide a breathing space for another 'investigative agency' to reach some conclusion; the agency had been assisting ATIC through 1948 and, contrary to official USAF policy, was maintaining a high level of interest during 1949." Turner, O.H. "Scientific and Intelligence Aspects of the UFO Problem," Australian Joint Intelligence Organisation, Department of Defence, 1971.

4. How were witnesses, experiencers, and potential whistleblowers treated by private interests and state actors that maintained secrecy, and what harms resulted?
5. And how did the relationship between government agencies and private contractors develop in ways that placed potentially transformative knowledge outside the reach of democratic oversight?[47]

Above all, the reckoning must encompass the full scope of conduct undertaken in the name of secrecy, including any actions that caused direct harm to individuals, whether through the suppression of medical care for those injured by UAP encounters, retaliation against witnesses and whistleblowers, or other measures whose nature and extent can only be established through the process itself.

This historical reckoning is not an exercise in assigning individual blame. Many of the individuals who helped maintain UAP secrecy operated within institutional structures that left them few choices. Many acted in what they genuinely believed was the national interest, particularly during the Cold War, when the threat of nuclear conflict and geopolitical instability made secrecy appear not merely justified but patriotic.

Acknowledging the reality of those motivations is essential, both as a matter of fairness and as a practical necessity for securing the cooperation of individuals whose knowledge is critical to establishing the full historical record. The aim is not to merely punish people who followed their institutions' directives. It is to understand how those institutions failed democratic governance and to ensure

[47] "There's a sophisticated disinformation campaign targeting the US populace, which is extremely unethical and immoral, and it's totally frightening." "UFO Whistleblower David Grusch: 'We are not alone.'" *NewsNation*, April 2, 2025.

that the structural conditions that enabled that failure are identified and remedied.

Reconciliation

Understanding what occurred is a necessary step, but not sufficient on its own. A disclosure process that exposes the historical record without creating pathways for those with direct knowledge to come forward will produce an incomplete picture and leave critical questions unanswered. Reconciliation is the mechanism that bridges the gap between historical reckoning and full truth.

The core challenge is that individuals who possess firsthand knowledge of vital UAP programs may currently be bound by security oaths, non-disclosure agreements, and institutional cultures that treat any unauthorized communication as a career-ending, even life-threatening, betrayal. Whistleblower testimony before Congress has described environments of intimidation and coercion designed to ensure silence.[48] Under these conditions, releasing documents alone will not produce the testimony and contextual knowledge that only witnesses and participants can provide.

A reconciliation framework must therefore create conditions under which individuals with direct program knowledge can come forward, provide truthful and complete testimony, and do so with credible assurance that cooperation

[48] David Grusch: "…I do have knowledge of active planned reprisal activity against myself, and other colleagues and it is very, very upsetting to me….There were certain colleagues of mine that were brutally administratively attacked, and it actually makes me very upset as a leader to see that happen to other co-workers and actually superiors of mine over the last 3 years….I call it administrative terrorism. That is their quiver—their tool in the toolbox to silence people, especially, you know, career government service cares about their career, cares about their clearance, their reputation to climb the ladder, and when you threaten that flow—career path—a lot of people back off." U.S. Congress, House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena: Implications on National Security, Public Safety, and Government Transparency, testimony of David Grusch

and honesty will be given meaningful weight in any determination regarding their individual circumstances.

The process must be designed to maximize the recovery of truth while treating individuals fairly, taking into account the conditions under which they operated, the nature and extent of their involvement, whether they acted under institutional direction or independent initiative, and the value of their testimony to the public interest. Many who participated in maintaining UAP secrecy did so under orders, within institutional structures that left them few choices, and in what they genuinely believed was service to the nation. A process that fails to acknowledge that complexity will not secure the cooperation it requires.

The reconciliation challenge is not monolithic, and the framework must recognize that it encompasses distinct populations whose circumstances and needs differ fundamentally. Secrecy obligations bind some individuals even though they committed no wrongdoing. They followed lawful orders, honored their oaths, and may possess critical knowledge they would willingly share if released from the legal and institutional constraints that prevent them from doing so. For these individuals, the barrier to cooperation is not fear of consequences; it is the absence of a lawful pathway to speak. Others participated in maintaining the secrecy regime under institutional direction, in roles and under conditions that left them limited autonomy, and may need credible assurance that their cooperation will be recognized and that coming forward will not result in their personal destruction for carrying out directives they did not design. Still others may have engaged in conduct, whether involving the misuse of classification authority, the obstruction of congressional oversight, the suppression of scientific knowledge, or actions that caused direct harm to individuals that rises to a level requiring formal legal evaluation.

A reconciliation framework that treats these populations identically will fail all of them: it will offer protections that innocent participants do not need, while extending to others assurances that the public will not accept. The framework must be calibrated to distinguish among them, providing release where release is sufficient, meaningful recognition of cooperation where cooperation is offered in good faith, and appropriate process where the nature of the conduct demands it.

A question of sequence also bears directly on the credibility of any reconciliation framework. Individuals who have already come forward, who testified under oath before Congress, filed whistleblower complaints through lawful channels, accepted professional and reputational consequences, and did so without requesting any deal in return, should be the first to receive release from secrecy obligations and meaningful institutional protection. They answered the call that Congress itself issued. They fulfilled their constitutional obligations at personal risk. And they were left exposed. A framework that extends pathways to those who have maintained silence while leaving unprotected those who already spoke would send an unmistakable signal, not of reconciliation, but of indifference to the very courage the process depends on. How the government treats the individuals who have already come forward is the credibility test for any broader framework. If those who took the risk are not vindicated, no one watching will believe that cooperation is safe.

At the same time, the process cannot predetermine outcomes. The public's willingness to support reconciliation depends on confidence that the process is fair and that its design does not foreclose appropriate responses to conduct that may come to light. The specific mechanisms for balancing incentives with the demands of justice across a range of potential circumstances require careful legislative development, work that extends beyond the scope of this

paper. The principle must guide the work: truth recovery and fairness to individuals are complementary objectives, not competing ones.

Such a process serves multiple purposes simultaneously. It produces the testimony and contextual knowledge necessary for a complete historical record. It shows the public that government is serious about transparency and not engaging in another exercise in managed releases and self-preservation. It provides individuals who may have carried the burden of extraordinary knowledge under enforced silence for years or decades with a measure of dignity and recognition. And it creates a foundation of trust upon which the broader disclosure process can build, a framework that solicits and supports the truth rather than predetermined outcomes.

Structural Reform

The final dimension of disclosure is forward-looking. Releasing information, documenting what happened, and creating conditions for testimony is not enough. The structural conditions that enabled an eight-decade secrecy regime must be identified and reformed so that a comparable failure of democratic governance cannot recur.

This means reforming the classification authorities misapplied to UAP- and NHI-related information, such as the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 and its Restricted Data provisions,[49] and the Invention Secrecy Act's patent suppression

[49] Note, the "Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena Disclosure Act of 2024 (UAPDA)" amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 stated under Findings, Declarations, and Purposes: "Legislation is necessary because credible evidence and testimony indicates that Federal Government unidentified anomalous phenomena records exist that have not been declassified or subject to mandatory declassification review…due in part to exemptions under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.), as well as an over-broad interpretation of 'transclassified foreign nuclear information', which is also exempt from mandatory declassification, thereby preventing public disclosure under existing provisions of law."

mechanisms,[50] to ensure they cannot again be used to sequester entire domains of scientific knowledge.[51] It means restructuring the relationship between government agencies and private contractors so that materials and technologies of extraordinary significance cannot be placed beyond the reach of statutory oversight through contractual arrangements. It means establishing permanent oversight mechanisms, not temporary review boards but enduring institutional structures, that ensure congressional access to all UAP-related programs and prevent the re-emergence of compartmented activities operating outside constitutional authority. It means codifying whistleblower protections specifically designed for the UAP context, recognizing that existing frameworks have proved inadequate to protect individuals who attempt to bring information about these programs to light.

These reforms are not ancillary to disclosure; they are its purpose. Releasing historical records while leaving the structures that produced the secrecy intact would be a half-measure, a nod to satisfying public curiosity that fails to address the underlying failure of governance. Disclosure is not merely about informing the public about what happened. It must simultaneously restore the conditions under which democratic self-governance can function: transparency as the

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[50] "The Invention Secrecy Act of 1951 requires the government to impose 'secrecy orders' on certain patent applications that contain sensitive information, thereby restricting disclosure of the invention and withholding the grant of a patent. Remarkably, this requirement can be imposed even when the application is generated and entirely owned by a private individual or company without government sponsorship or support. There are several types of secrecy orders which range in severity from simple prohibitions on export (but allowing other disclosure for legitimate business purposes) up to classification, requiring secure storage of the application and prohibition of all disclosure. At the end of fiscal year 2025, there were 6,543 secrecy orders in effect." Invention Secrecy, Project on Government Secrecy, Federation of American Scientists.

[51] Marc Andreessen: "And you'll recall that what [the Biden White House] said was, 'No, actually we can classify math.' And literally, this is verbatim, 'We classified whole entire areas of physics in the nuclear era and made them state secrets,' of the theoretical science of physics. 'We classified them and made them state secrets, and that research vanished. And we are absolutely capable of doing that again for AI. We will classify any area of math that we think is leading in a bad direction and it will end.'" Marc Andreessen, "Trump vs. Biden: Tech Policy," *a16z Podcast*, published July 16, 2024.

default, oversight as the norm, and secrecy as a limited, justified, and temporary exception rather than a permanent institutional reflex.

Disclosure as a Continuing Obligation

Finally, disclosure must be understood as an ongoing obligation rather than a one-time event. As new information is collected, as technologies enable new forms of analysis, and as public understanding evolves, disclosure processes must adapt. Permanent institutional structures that ensure continued transparency, regular review of classification decisions, mechanisms for incorporating new information into public knowledge, and sustained oversight by elected representatives are required. The goal is not merely to release a historical archive but to fundamentally transform how the government handles UAP- and NHI-related information going forward.

Again, properly understood, disclosure is not a single act but a transformation in governing posture. It moves from presumptive secrecy to presumptive openness, from compartmentalized control to broad engagement, from indefinite classification to time-limited protection, and from institutional self-preservation to democratic accountability. It encompasses information, history, reconciliation, and reform, and it will remain incomplete if any of these dimensions are ignored.

VI. Experiencers: A Governance and Public Health Reality

Among the most significant yet systematically neglected dimensions of the UAP issue are the individuals who report direct encounters with the phenomena, commonly referred to as "experiencers," or, in the language of the proposed UAPDA, "close observers." Survey data suggest these individuals number in the millions worldwide. Their experiences intersect with critical governance and public health concerns. Their testimony constitutes a valuable, underutilized source of information on UAP characteristics and behavior, while also offering rare insight into the likely intentions of NHI. Despite their obvious importance, these individuals have been failed by institutions that stigmatize their accounts, by healthcare systems unprepared to treat their injuries, and by a secrecy regime that denies the reality of what they have encountered. Any substantive disclosure plan must treat their needs as a central obligation.

Scale of the Experiencer Population

Survey research establishes that encounters with UAP are far more common than public discourse typically acknowledges. A 2023 *Ipsos* poll found that 10% of American adults reported personally witnessing a UAP.[52] A 2021 *YouGov* poll found that 7% of Britons reported similar experiences.[53]

Yet these figures almost certainly understate the true prevalence of this phenomenon. Research indicates that only 28% of experiencers report their

[52] "Many Americans Believe in the Supernatural, UFOs." *Ipsos Public Affairs*. July 24, 2023.
[53] "Half of Britons think aliens exist – and 7% claim to have seen an UFO." *YouGov*. June 25, 2021,

sightings anywhere, with stigma serving as the primary barrier.[54] Among military pilots, highly trained observers with professional obligations to report unusual phenomena, underreporting is even more severe. Again, as Graves testified before Congress, the stigma preventing pilots from reporting is a national security problem.[55] The ODNI has formally acknowledged this problem, noting that "sociocultural stigmas and sensor limitations remain obstacles to collecting data on UAP" and that "reputational risk may keep many observers silent."[56]

The Bigelow Aerospace Advanced Space Studies (BAASS) Data Warehouse, one of the largest aggregations of UAP encounter reports assembled, contains more than 248,000 entries.[57] While this vast collection likely represents only a fraction of actual encounters, the data is sufficient to establish that UAP contacts are not isolated anomalies but a persistent, widespread phenomenon affecting a substantial cross-section of the global population.

These figures describe sightings. A subset of experiencers reports something more specific: direct encounters with an apparent intelligence. Research by the Dr. Edgar Mitchell Foundation for Research into Extraterrestrial and Extraordinary Experiences (FREE), which surveyed more than 2,500 individuals who had already identified themselves as having had contact experiences, found that 54% reported observing an NHI entity.[58] Because the sample is self-selected, this

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[54] Stubbings, Daniel, et al. "Who Sees UFOs? The Relationship Between Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena Sightings and Personality Factors." *Journal of Scientific Exploration*. Vol. 38, no. 1, 2024.
[55] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Oversight and Accountability. Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena: Implications on National Security, Public Safety, and Government Transparency. 118th Congress, 1st session, July 26, 2023. Testimony of Ryan Graves.
[56] "Preliminary Assessment: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena." Office of the Director of National Intelligence. June 25, 2021.
[57] Lacatski, James et al. "*Inside the US Government Covert UFO Program: Initial Revelations*." RTMA LLC Henderson, NV. Kindle Edition.
[58] Hernandez, Reinerio, et al. "A Study on Reported Contact With Non-Human Intelligence Associated With Unidentified Aerial Phenomena." *Journal of Scientific Exploration* 32, Vol. No. 2 (2018): 298–348.

is not a prevalence estimate and should not be read as one. What it describes is the character of experiences within a population that already identifies itself as having had them, and it is that population, not the broader group of UAP witnesses, whose clinical and institutional needs this section addresses

The Double Harm

uNHIdden, a UK-based mental health charity led by a Medical Advisory Board of practicing physicians and clinical psychologists, has identified what it describes as a "double harm" suffered by experiencers: "first, the frightening or disorientating nature of the experience itself; and second, having their attempts to share what they have seen with friends, family and the medical profession, rejected as a lie, a mistake or a sign of mental illness."[59] This formulation captures a dynamic that runs through the clinical literature and the accumulated testimony of experiencers across decades.

The institutional roots of this double harm are traceable to deliberate government policy. The CIA's 1953 Robertson Panel recommended monitoring civilian UAP research groups for their potential influence on public opinion and conducting public "debunking" campaigns through mass media to reduce interest in the phenomenon.[60] That posture, official dismissal coupled with surveillance of those who persisted with their inquiries, established a template that has shaped the institutional response to experiencers for seven decades. As uNHIdden observes, the resulting environment creates a structural barrier to care: "How can doctors be expected to treat the impact of something that the…Government will not even acknowledge?"

[59] "The Impact of Exceptional Experiences and Disclosure on Mental Health and Wellbeing." uNHIdden. Berkley Square, London, April 2024.
[60] Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). "Report of the Scientific Advisory Panel on Unidentified Flying Objects (Robertson Panel Report)." February 16, 1953.

The credibility paradox is particularly stark among military experiencers. Commander David Fravor's account of the 2004 USS Nimitz encounter, corroborated by radar data, infrared video, and multiple trained observers, gave the experiencer population unprecedented credibility.[61] Yet even witnesses of Fravor's caliber have described facing institutional resistance when attempting to report through official channels.[62] If military personnel with the highest levels of training and the strongest corroborating evidence face significant barriers to being taken seriously, the obstacles confronting civilian experiencers are exponentially greater.

Physical Health Consequences

Government records document the physical health implications of UAP encounters, and independent clinical research corroborates them. The Defense Intelligence Agency's 2010 Defense Intelligence Reference Document (DIRD), "Anomalous Acute and Subacute Field Effects on Human Biological Tissues," examined cases of "unintended injury to human observers" from "exposures to anomalous vehicles." The DIRD identified injuries including radiation burns, paralysis, and brain damage, concluding that "the primary mechanisms of injury are related to electromagnetic radiation."[63]

The Rendlesham Forest case provides a concrete illustration. In December 1980, Airman First Class John Burroughs encountered a UAP while on duty at RAF Bentwaters/Woodbridge in the United Kingdom. Burroughs subsequently

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[61] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Oversight and Accountability. Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena: Implications on National Security, Public Safety, and Government Transparency. 118th Congress, 1st session, July 26, 2023. Testimony of David Fravor.
[62] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Oversight and Accountability. Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena: Implications on National Security, Public Safety, and Government Transparency. 118th Congress, 1st session, July 26, 2023. Testimony of Ryan Graves.
[63] Defense Intelligence Reference Document. Anomalous Acute and Subacute Field Effects on Human Biological Tissues. Defense Intelligence Agency, March 11, 2010, prepared under the Advanced Aerospace Weapon System Applications (AAWSA) Program (AAWSAP).

developed heart and vision damage consistent with the injury patterns documented in the DIRD.

After a prolonged effort to obtain his records and pursue his claim, the Veterans Administration granted Burroughs full disability benefits for the injuries he sustained.[64] The determination established service connection, but it did not represent a government finding as to the cause. Notably, however, the injury pattern is consistent with the effects the DIA reference document attributes to broadband non-ionizing electromagnetic radiation.

BAASS data indicate that approximately 0.5% of documented UAP sightings involve physiological reactions by witnesses.[65] Applied to survey data on encounter prevalence, this suggests a non-trivial population of individuals who may have sustained physical harm from UAP encounters. Yet, the experiencer population currently lacks an institutional pathway for appropriate medical assessment or treatment.

Psychological Dimensions

The psychological effects of UAP and NHI encounters are complex, variable, and poorly served by existing clinical frameworks. Dr. John E. Mack, the Pulitzer Prize-winning Harvard psychiatrist who conducted extensive clinical research with experiencers, documented that individuals reported "multi-dimensional trauma" including "the helplessness as terrifying intrusive procedures are inflicted on their bodies, the isolation from family and friends, the inevitable shock to their worldviews." Mack found that experiencers were often left with "fears, nightmares, and other sequelae of severe stress." Yet he also observed that the

[64] Martinez, Toby and Frakes, Shane. "John Burroughs and the Government's Unprecedented Acknowledgment." *Roswell Daily Record*, April 25, 2023.
[65] Lacatski, James et al. "*Inside the US Government Covert UFO Program: Initial Revelations*." RTMA LLC Henderson, NV. Kindle Edition.

phenomenon was "not simply traumatic," noting that many experiencers underwent "profound personal growth and transformation," including heightened concern for the environment and shifts toward less materialistic orientations.[66]

The critical clinical finding is that conventional therapeutic approaches consistently fail these patients. Mack documented that many experiencers had been subjected to what he called "unavailing psychotherapy" by clinicians unfamiliar with the phenomenon, producing significant and, in his view, unnecessary stress. As noted in the uNHIdden paper referenced under the Double Harm subsection, Professor Thomas Rabeyron's fifteen years of clinical work at the Center for Information, Research and Counseling about Exceptional Experiences (CIRCEE) in France independently reached a parallel conclusion: that experiencers' accounts are routinely "confused with or reduced to a medical condition," inducing a "secondary trauma" when individuals feel their experiences dismissed as mental disorders.[67] The convergence matters because the two emerged from different countries, decades, and clinical traditions.

CIRCEE's response, Psychodynamic Psychotherapy focused on Anomalous Experiences (PPAE), offers a clinical model grounded in non-judgmental phenomenological exploration, through which Rabeyron reports patients can navigate what Mack termed "ontological shock"[68] and reach meaningful psychological integration. Whether the approach generalizes has not been established at scale. It shows that a clinical pathway is possible—which is more than currently exists in the U.S.

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[66] Mack, John E. Abduction: Human Encounters with Aliens. New York: Ballantine Books, 1995, 395-399.
[67] "The Impact of Exceptional Experiences and Disclosure on Mental Health and Wellbeing." uNHIdden. Berkley Square, London, April 2024.
[68] Mack, John E. Abduction: Human Encounters with Aliens. New York: Ballantine Books, 1995, 12.

The harms described above are not confined to private life. They have direct governance consequences.

Governance Implications

The experiencer population raises governance concerns that extend beyond public health. Experiencers who are government employees, military personnel, or contractor staff may possess information relevant to classified programs. Congressional testimony has alleged that individuals with direct knowledge of UAP retrieval and reverse engineering programs have been prevented from speaking to oversight bodies, in some cases through intimidation.[69] The extreme compartmentalization that characterizes UAP-related programs means that some experiencers may have been directly involved in activities that Congress has a constitutional right and obligation to oversee.

More broadly, the mistreatment of experiencers raises civil liberties concerns. Individuals who report UAP encounters should not face adverse employment actions, security clearance revocations, or professional consequences solely because of their experiences or their willingness to report them. Yet this is precisely what occurs. Existing whistleblower protections, including the Intelligence Community Whistleblower Protection Act, have proved inadequate in practice and do not specifically address the circumstances of UAP experiencers, including individuals whose reports may have national security implications but fall outside traditional categories of waste, fraud, or abuse.[70]

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[69] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Oversight and Accountability. Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena: Implications on National Security, Public Safety, and Government Transparency. 118th Congress, 1st session, July 26, 2023. Testimony of David Grusch.
[70] Schwellenbach, Nick and Smithberger, Mandy. "Confrontation Over Intelligence Whistleblower Complaint Shows Laws Falling Short." Project On Government Oversight, September 24, 2019.

Policy Interventions

Addressing the experiencer dimension requires action across four domains.

First, establish protected reporting channels. The aviation safety reporting model, which allows personnel to report safety concerns confidentially without punitive action, provides a tested framework. The Safe Airspace for Americans Act (H.R. 6967),[71] introduced in the 118th Congress and supported by Americans for Safe Aerospace,[72] proposes precisely such a system for aviation personnel encountering UAP. Equivalent protections should extend to military personnel, government employees, contractors, and civilians, with clear legal prohibitions against retaliation. This legislation should pass and be enacted into law.

Second, healthcare systems must develop the capacity to serve the experiencer's needs. This includes training programs for providers to recognize and treat UAP-related physical injuries and psychological effects; adapting and disseminating clinical methodologies, such as CIRCEE's PPAE framework, for English-speaking healthcare systems; research programs to develop evidence-based treatment protocols; and integrating experiencer health concerns into existing public health infrastructure. The Department of Veterans Affairs, with its institutional experience addressing complex, stigmatized conditions like PTSD, offers a potential institutional model.

Third, research engagement with experiencers must meet the highest ethical standards. The history of medical research, from the Tuskegee syphilis study to Cold War-era human radiation experiments, provides ample warning about the

[71] Safe Airspace for Americans Act, H.R. 6967, 118th Cong. (2024)
[72] Americans for Safe Aerospace. The organization was founded by former Navy pilot Ryan Graves and other aviation professionals who have publicly advocated for the destigmatization of UAP reporting and the establishment of protected reporting channels.

exploitation of vulnerable populations.[73] The Belmont Report's principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice must govern all experiencer research, ensuring informed consent, privacy protections, and participant access to findings.[74]

Fourth, the experiencer community must be engaged as partners in policy development rather than treated solely as subjects of investigation. Organizations like uNHIdden, Americans for Safe Aerospace, and established experiencer support networks represent resources that should be consulted and integrated into official response frameworks. As uNHIdden has argued, a "people-centric approach to UAP disclosure is essential."

The Strategic Imperative

A credible disclosure process must address the experiencer population directly—both to remedy documented harms and to ensure that the testimony and knowledge this population holds contributes to the broader public understanding. If experiencers continue to face stigmatization and institutional dismissal, others with relevant information, including individuals with direct program knowledge, will be discouraged from coming forward, perpetuating the information gaps that have impeded understanding for decades. Conversely, if robust protections and support systems demonstrate that those who come forward will be treated with dignity, the resulting increase in reporting will substantially enhance the evidentiary base available for scientific analysis, threat assessment, and public understanding.

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[73] The U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. September 4, 2024; Final Report of the Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments. Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995.

[74] The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research. National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. Washington, DC: Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979.

How the government treats experiencers will be the most visible indicator of whether a disclosure process is genuine or performative. A framework that releases documents while continuing to ignore the people most directly affected by the phenomenon will lack credibility. A framework that protects, supports, and engages experiencers will demonstrate that disclosure is not an exercise in institutional self-preservation but a commitment to confronting reality in its full dimensions.

VII. The Risks of Catastrophic Disclosure

The question is no longer whether UAP- and NHI-related information will eventually reach the public. It is whether that disclosure will occur through a managed, lawful process or through a breakdown in control. The window for the former is narrowing. The costs of the latter (institutional, social, economic, and geopolitical) would be severe.

Catastrophic disclosure is the chaotic release of consequential information through leaks, foreign government action, undeniable public events, or technological exposure outside any official process. The danger is not simply that such disclosure would be sudden, but rather that it would arrive without preparation, without an agreed factual foundation, and without trusted institutions positioned to provide context.

In the modern information environment, where digital content replicates globally within minutes, social media amplifies the most alarming interpretations, and the news cycle rewards sensation over analysis, incoherent disclosure could shape public understanding before any official response is formulated. The result would not be informed public discourse but fragmented, competing narratives driven by confusion, fear, and opportunism.

Five scenarios, each increasingly probable, illustrate the risk.

Unauthorized Leaks

The precedents of Edward Snowden's 2013 disclosure of NSA surveillance programs[75] and Chelsea Manning's release of diplomatic cables[76] demonstrate

[75] Macaskill, Ewen and Gabriel Dance. "NSA Files: Decoded." The Guardian. November 1, 2013.
[76] "The US Embassy Cables." *The Guardian*. May 2025.

that even the most highly classified information can be exposed by a single individual with sufficient access and motivation. In the UAP context, congressional testimony and public statements from multiple former officials suggest that a growing number of individuals with direct program knowledge are prepared to release information if managed disclosure does not occur through legitimate channels.

Unlike the Snowden disclosures, which involved programs that fit within existing frameworks of understanding, leaked evidence of recovered NHI technology or biological materials would challenge fundamental assumptions about humanity's place in the cosmos, producing psychological and social impacts of a qualitatively different order.

Foreign Government Disclosure

Multiple nations have investigated UAP with varying degrees of transparency, including Russia, the United Kingdom, France, Brazil, Chile, and others. China has announced increased efforts to detect and analyze UAP, raising the prospect that Beijing could achieve analytical or technological breakthroughs before the U.S.[77] If a foreign government were to announce the recovery of NHI technology, successful reverse engineering of anomalous capabilities, or contact with NHI, the U.S. would face an immediate credibility crisis.[78] American silence or denial would be universally interpreted as confirmation that the U.S. possessed similar knowledge while concealing it from the public and its allies. The geopolitical consequences, erosion of alliance trust, loss of technological

[77] Chen, Stephen. "China military uses AI to track rapidly increasing UFOs." *South China Morning Post*. June 4, 2021.
[78] "So if a nation like China says, we're there, most of the world is going to believe that. And that will be a Sputnik moment where all of the devotion that has gone to NASA and Los Alamos and our incredible scientific capability in the West has the risk of shifting to Beijing." Malmgren, Pippa. "The Space Race, Geopolitics and the Quest for Ultraterrestrial Life." Summit. August 28, 2024.

advantage, domestic upheaval, and potential security crises could be profound.

The dynamics of great-power competition make this scenario increasingly likely. The prisoner's dilemma logic applies: each nation has an incentive to disclose before others do to shape the narrative and maximize strategic benefit, yet all would be better served by coordinated disclosure than by unilateral action. Without international coordination mechanisms, the risk of competitive disclosure grows as nations pursue perceived advantage without regard for global stability.[79]

Undeniable Public Events

Whether it's a mass sighting witnessed by thousands in a major urban center, a UAP incident resulting in casualties or infrastructure damage, or a contact event occurring in public view with extensive documentation, any of these could force an admission regardless of government intent. The increasing prevalence of high-quality smartphone cameras, the proliferation of commercial satellite systems, and the expansion of sensor networks for environmental and security monitoring all increase the probability that significant UAP events will be captured in ways that resist dismissal. The government's ability to control the narrative depends on being ahead of events, not behind them.

[79] The prisoner's dilemma is a game theory scenario in which two parties, acting rationally in their own self-interest, produce a collectively less than optimal outcome. In the classic formulation, two prisoners are interrogated separately: each has an incentive to betray the other to minimize their own sentence, yet both would be better off if they cooperated and remained silent. In the UAP disclosure context, nations face similar incentives: each may benefit from unilateral disclosure (gaining credibility, shaping narratives, demonstrating technological prowess), yet all would be better served by coordinated, multilateral disclosure that prevents competitive dynamics and maintains global stability. See Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Prisoner's Dilemma," ed. Steven Kuhn, last modified October 24, 2025.

Artificial Intelligence

The growing use and capabilities of artificial intelligence (AI) may be the most consequential scenario of all. AI is fundamentally eroding the infrastructure of secrecy. Classification systems were built for an era in which governments controlled most of the relevant data, most of the analytical tools, and most of the people capable of combining them. That era is ending.

AI changes the secrecy discussion in at least four ways. It expands the capacity to analyze commercial sensor data at scale. It enables the reconstruction of hidden patterns from partial or scattered records. It lowers the barrier to entry for independent civilian researchers. And it introduces a novel risk: models can expose relationships that governments assumed would remain buried in massive datasets.

AI changes the disclosure problem in one critical respect: it cannot be deterred the way human whistleblowers can. No single government can control or constrain these capabilities globally. Even if the U.S. were to restrict domestic AI development,[80] at severe cost to scientific and economic competitiveness, other nations would continue advancing AI capabilities and could apply them to UAP-related data. The capability is no longer containable.

The timeline may be shorter than policymakers appreciate. AI advancement has consistently outpaced expert predictions, with capabilities projected to take decades materializing in years or months. Computer vision systems capable of identifying objects in satellite imagery with superhuman accuracy are already

[80] Note: Marc Andreessen, co-founder of the venture capital firm Andreessen Horowitz, recounted how White House officials asserted that they were fully prepared to classify areas of AI, particularly math, in much the same way it did with nuclear physics, effectively halting advancements in any field deemed a threat to national security. Andreessen, Marc. "Trump vs. Biden: Tech Policy." *a16z Podcast*, July 16, 2024.

deployed commercially. The integration of multiple AI capabilities, including computer vision, natural language processing, data correlation, and anomaly detection, into unified analytical systems is progressing rapidly. Within the near term, civilian researchers may possess AI-enhanced capabilities sufficient to detect, document, and analyze UAP phenomena in ways that render official denial untenable.

The AI pathway to disclosure creates a stark choice: manage disclosure proactively through deliberate institutional processes, or watch as AI-enabled researchers, foreign governments, or non-state actors force it through piecemeal, uncoordinated revelation. The latter scenario, information emerging from multiple sources without context, coordination, or authoritative guidance, with different systems producing conflicting conclusions, would make coherent public understanding nearly impossible.

Executive-Directed Disclosure Without Institutional Architecture

A fifth pathway to catastrophic disclosure has already begun to materialize, one that is uniquely dangerous because it arrives under the banner of transparency. In February 2026, President Donald Trump directed federal departments and agencies to identify and release UAP-related files.[81] On May 8, 2026, the Department of War began publishing records through a dedicated platform, the Presidential Unsealing and Reporting System for UAP Encounters (PURSUE).[82] The initial release included more than 160 records spanning decades, including

[81] Graef, Alleen. "Trump Says He Will Direct Government Agencies to Release Files Related to Extraterrestrial Life and UFOs." *CNN*, February 20, 2026.
[82] Press Release. "Department of War Releases Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena Files in Historic Transparency Effort." U.S. Department of War, May 8, 2026.

reports, photographs, videos, witness accounts, and military records, and administration officials said additional releases, including videos, would follow.[83]

The impulse toward presidential transparency on UAP is welcome. But the manner of release illustrates precisely why executive action alone, without the institutional architecture of managed disclosure, risks producing many of the same harms as improperly managed revelation.

The PURSUE releases are being conducted without an independent review board to verify completeness and authenticity, without a clear disclosure plan to sequence information and provide context, without scientific analysis to help the public and research community interpret what the files contain, without coordination with Congress as a co-equal branch of oversight, and without whistleblower protections that would enable the human testimony necessary to give evidence meaning.

The result has been predictable. As former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Intelligence Christopher Mellon observed after the first PURSUE release, "data alone is not disclosure. Releasing raw files without context may confuse more than clarify." Former senior defense officials noted that much of the initial material was low-quality, already in the public domain, or lacked the features needed for independent analysis.[84] In other words, the releases create an impression of transparency while the most consequential information (the programs, the materials, the decisions, and the people) remain untouched.

This approach introduces several specific risks that parallel those of chaotic disclosure. Document dumps without expert contextual framing leave

[83] U.S. Department of War Website. Accessed May 14, 2026.
[84] Vincent, Brandi. "'Data Alone is Not Disclosure:' UAP Research Community Reacts to Trump's First PURSUE File Drop." *DefenseScoop*, May 14, 2026.

interpretation to whoever fills the vacuum first, from social media commentators, podcasters, and debunkers to foreign intelligence services and cult leaders.

Files released through an executive-controlled process with no independent verification could include material curated to reinforce particular narratives, whether through deliberate selection or the inherent bias of agencies that maintained secrecy for decades and decided which records the public sees. The very institutions that conducted documented disinformation campaigns, from the Robertson Panel to AARO's 2024 report, are now the sole arbiters of what gets released and what remains concealed. Without an independent review, no mechanism can distinguish genuine transparency from managed perception.

Perhaps most critically, executive-directed document releases provide no pathway to the dimensions of disclosure that Section V of this paper identified as essential: no historical reckoning with how the secrecy regime operated, no reconciliation process that creates conditions for individuals with program knowledge to come forward, and no structural reforms to prevent recurrence. Documents without human context, without the testimony of those who created them, operated the programs, and made the decisions they reflect, produce an incomplete and potentially misleading record. A stack of files, however large, is not disclosure. Disclosure requires interpretation and institutional transformation that no document dump, however well-intentioned, can deliver.

The PURSUE program thus represents a cautionary illustration in real time: even when the executive branch acts in good faith, the absence of a legislative framework, independent oversight, and an institutional architecture produces bad outcomes. These results fall fundamentally short of what democratic governance requires, and carry their own political risks.

The Convergence

These five scenarios are not mutually exclusive. They are converging. The same AI capabilities that empower civilian researchers also accelerate foreign governments' analytical capacity. The same institutional frustration that motivates potential leakers also drives congressional pressure for legislative action. The same sensor proliferation that increases the likelihood of documented public events also generates the data that AI systems can analyze. And the executive branch's own attempts at transparency, conducted without adequate institutional architecture, risk compounding rather than resolving the information chaos. Each pathway reinforces the others, compressing the timeline for incoherent or inadequately managed disclosure.

The consequences of catastrophic disclosure would extend across every dimension of public life. Financial markets, dependent on predictable frameworks, would react to the fundamental uncertainty introduced by the confirmed existence of NHI or the recovery of advanced technologies.[85] Government agencies that maintained secrecy would face intense demands for explanation. Scientific institutions that dismissed credible evidence would confront questions about their own rigor. Media organizations that perpetuated stigma would face scrutiny for their role in enabling concealment. The cumulative effect would be a crisis of institutional credibility arriving simultaneously across multiple sectors, precisely the conditions under which conspiracy theories, extremist narratives, and social fragmentation flourish.

These consequences are not inevitable; they result from delay. Every mechanism available for managed disclosure, including the UAPDA's proposed independent Review Board, its "Controlled Disclosure Campaign Plan," and its

[85] Wilkins, Joe. "Former Banking Insider Makes Strange Warning About Discovery of Alien Life." *Futurism*, January 25, 2026.

structured declassification timelines, exists to prevent these outcomes. As retired U.S. Army Colonel Karl E. Nell argued in a paper for the Sol Foundation, the UAPDA "holds the best promise of establishing proper federal oversight of anomalous phenomena, avoiding catastrophic disclosure through a controlled process, redressing potential misdeeds, preventing the loss of technological dominance, and reasserting the moral right of the American people to fully understand the world in which we live."[86] The Review Board's authority to develop a formal disclosure plan containing "precise requirements for periodic review, downgrading, and declassification" is the essential mechanism we need for preventing the scenarios outlined above while preserving democratic accountability.

The choice is not between disclosure and secrecy. Secrecy is failing on its own terms. The choice is between managed disclosure conducted through lawful, accountable institutions and catastrophic disclosure forced by events the government can no longer control. The longer the decision is deferred, the narrower the window for the first option becomes.

[86] Nell, Karl E. The UFO Enigma: A Call for US Government Disclosure. The Sol Foundation, Policy Papers of the Sol Foundation, Vol. 2, No. 2, Spring 2025, 18.

VIII. Framework for Managed Disclosure

The preceding sections have established what disclosure must encompass: information, historical reckoning, reconciliation, and structural reform, and why delay carries escalating risks. This section addresses how disclosure should be implemented: through what institutional mechanisms, under what authorities, and with what safeguards.

Why Executive Action Alone Is Insufficient

The PURSUE program, launched by the Department of War (DoW) on May 8, 2026, provides a real-time demonstration of what disclosure looks like without adequate institutional architecture. Through a dedicated government website, more than 160 records were released, including reports, photographs, videos, and witness accounts spanning decades, with additional releases promised. The administration framed this as an unprecedented commitment to transparency.[87]

Yet, as noted in Section VII, the reaction from the community most knowledgeable about UAP and NHI was telling. Mellon observed that "data alone is not disclosure," and former senior defense officials noted that much of the initial material was low-quality or already available. The release created an impression of openness, while the institutional architecture necessary for genuine disclosure remained entirely absent.

PURSUE illustrates a fundamental limitation of executive-directed disclosure. Without a framework enacted in statute, there exists no enforceable mechanism to compel disclosure across all government agencies and private contractors, no independent oversight to verify completeness or prevent selective release,

[87] Bose, Nandita and Hunnicutt, Trevor. "Alien files incoming: Trump orders government release of UFO records." *Reuters*, February 19, 2026.

no protection for individuals who come forward with program knowledge, no structured process for the historical reckoning and reconciliation that Section V identified as essential dimensions of disclosure, and no guarantee that future administrations will maintain transparency commitments. Presidential directives, however well-intentioned, are revocable, non-binding on successor administrations, and dependent on the cooperation of the very agencies under scrutiny.

Legislation must fill the gap between executive intent and institutional capacity.

The UAPDA as Legislative Blueprint

The Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena Disclosure Act (UAPDA) of 2023,[88] modeled explicitly on the President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992,[89] provides the legislative framework for managed disclosure. The JFK Act established the Assassination Records Review Board (ARRB), which has authority to override agency classification decisions, and the ARRB released millions of pages of previously classified documents from the CIA, FBI, NSA, and other agencies while maintaining appropriate security protections. It is the right model, but its record is also a warning.

Congress commanded that every assassination record be disclosed in full within twenty-five years unless the President certified that identifiable harm outweighed the public interest. That deadline arrived in October 2017 and was not met. Postponements were certified in 2018 and extended in 2021, 2022, and

[88] All references to the UAPDA here and throughout this paper are to the Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena Disclosure Act of 2023, Senate Amendment 797 to the FY2024 National Defense Authorization Act (S. 2226), as published in the Congressional Record, 118th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 169, No. 120 (July 13, 2023): S2953–S2959, unless otherwise specified.
[89] U.S. Senate Democrats. "Schumer, Rounds Introduce New Legislation to Declassify Government Records Related to Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena and UFOs—Modeled After JFK Assassination Records Collection Act—as an Amendment to NDAA." Press Release, July 13, 2023.

2023. The vast majority of the known remaining records were released only after an executive order in January 2025 directed their disclosure—thirty-three years after enactment and eight years past the statutory deadline. The files did come out. But they came out because a President decided they should, not because the statute compelled it, and a President who decided otherwise would have faced no consequence. Congress wrote a mandate and produced a request.

The JFK Act's central weakness was the breadth of the postponement authority it left in place. Records could be withheld on a certification of identifiable harm, with no requirement that the harm be specified publicly, no independent body remaining to test the claim after the ARRB's 1998 sunset, and no practical limit on how often the certification could be renewed.

The UAPDA is built against that experience. Postponement requires clear and convincing evidence that specific, defined harms would result from disclosure, a demanding standard applied to an identified record rather than a general assertion. An independent Board makes the determination, and its recommendation is made on the record. Continued postponement requires the President's personal certification rather than an agency request processed on his behalf. The framework's obligations continue past the Board's termination, so enforcement does not revert to the agencies the Act was written to reach.

These provisions distinguish a disclosure mandate from a disclosure aspiration, and they are among the provisions that have been stripped or blocked at every attempt.

The JFK experience is the strongest available evidence for the argument this paper makes about executive-discretion disclosure generally. The same mechanism now operating through PURSUE (release at presidential direction, on

presidential timing, revocable at will) is what the JFK Act ultimately depended on after its statutory architecture failed. It produced disclosure. It also delayed disclosure by more than three decades and left the timing of a congressionally mandated release in the hands of a single officeholder.

The contrast with PURSUE is stark: where PURSUE relies on executive discretion, the UAPDA would establish a statutory obligation. Where PURSUE leaves the agencies that maintained secrecy in control of what gets released, the UAPDA would create an independent body with authority to override their classification claims. Where PURSUE provides no mechanism to compel testimony or access privately held materials, the UAPDA would grant subpoena power and eminent domain authority. Where PURSUE offers documents without context, the UAPDA would mandate a "Controlled Disclosure Campaign Plan." Where PURSUE provides no timeline, the UAPDA would impose enforceable deadlines and sunset provisions. And where PURSUE operates without specific whistleblower channels, the UAPDA would extend existing federal protections to the Review Board's processes and to witnesses.

The difference is not one of degree, but rather a difference between a document dump and a disclosure process, between releasing files and restoring democratic governance.

The Independent Review Board

The cornerstone of the UAPDA is the establishment of the Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena Records Review Board (URRB), an independent body composed of nine citizens appointed by the President, confirmed by the Senate, and selected without regard to political affiliation. The Board's mandate is to ensure and facilitate the review, transmission to the National Archives, and public disclosure of government records relating to UAP and NHI.

The UAPDA gives the URRB the powers needed to overcome the institutional resistance that has sustained UAP secrecy for decades. The URRB has authority to direct government offices to identify, organize, and transmit UAP records; to obtain access to records that have been identified, including directing agencies to provide additional information, records, or testimony the URRB has reason to believe it requires; to request the Attorney General to subpoena private persons to compel testimony, records, and other relevant information; to require any government office to account in writing for the destruction of any UAP-related records; to hold hearings, administer oaths, and subpoena witnesses and documents; and to receive information from the public regarding the identification and disclosure of UAP records.

Critically, the UAPDA defines the URRB's jurisdiction broadly. The term "unidentified anomalous phenomena record" encompasses records related to UAP, TUO, or NHI created or obtained by an extensive list of government entities, from the Executive Office of the President and the Department of War to the Department of Energy, the Intelligence Community (IC), NASA, and any private sector entity formerly or currently under contract with the federal government. This jurisdictional reach ensures that records cannot be shielded from review simply because they reside in an agency or contractor facility not explicitly named.

The URRB's composition reflects the multi-dimensional nature of the disclosure challenge. The UAPDA requires that members include at least one current or former national security official, one foreign service official, one scientist or engineer, one economist, one professional historian, and one sociologist. Members must be impartial citizens of high national professional standing with no prior or current involvement in legacy programs involving TUO or biological

evidence of NHI. This conflict-of-interest standard is essential: the individuals charged with reviewing the secrecy regime cannot be products of it.

The URRB is led by an Executive Director who serves as the principal liaison to the Executive Office of the President and Congress, chairs the Board, and retains the right to appeal directly to the President for decisions in which Board members may disagree. This structure ensures that the most consequential determinations receive presidential attention while maintaining the URRB's independence from the agencies under review.

Why Independence Is the Whole Point

The URRB's defining characteristic is not its subpoena power, its access, or its mandate. It is that the Board sits outside the agencies whose records it reviews. Every other feature depends on that one. The executive branch has now built the alternative, and the comparison is instructive because it is no longer hypothetical.

In June 2026, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, together with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the DoW, established a UAP Governance Board to provide guidance, recommendations, and interagency coordination, bringing together military, law enforcement, the IC, and other civilian agencies.[90] The Board convened for the first time on June 15, 2026. Its stated functions include prioritizing and synchronizing declassification actions in support of the PURSUE releases, and it operates in accordance with Executive Order 13526—the same classification authority under which UAP information has been withheld.[91]

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[90] Sharp, Christopher. U.S. Establishes New Interagency UAP Governance Board to Coordinate Investigations and Declassification. *Liberation Times*, June 16, 2026.
[91] Sharp, Christopher. U.S. Establishes New Interagency UAP Governance Board to Coordinate Investigations and Declassification. *Liberation Times*, June 16, 2026; see also Loeb, Avi. More Details on the UAP Science Advisory Council. *Medium*, June 16, 2026.

Shortly afterward, a UAP Science Advisory Council was constituted under the Board's direction, chaired by Harvard astrophysicist Dr. Avi Loeb and composed of researchers with substantial scientific credentials and UAP disclosure advocates Dr. Garry Nolan, Rear Admiral Timothy Gallaudet, USN, Retired, and Dr. Peter Skafish.[92] The Council reports its findings to the Governance Board and to ODNI.

The Science Advisory Council is a genuine advance. Its members are accomplished researchers, several of whom have argued publicly for years that this subject deserves rigorous scientific treatment, and their willingness to take on the work is a service. Nothing in what follows is a criticism of them. The difficulty lies one level above: in the structure to which the Council reports and in the constraints that structure places on what the Council can do.

Three features are decisive.

The Board is composed of the agencies whose conduct is at issue. The allegations that prompted the UAPDA concern programs within the DoW and the IC operating outside congressional notification requirements. The body now coordinating what is declassified is drawn from those same institutions. This is the objection that defeated the duplication argument against the URRB, applied at a higher level: an entity cannot supply independent review of itself, and adding more agencies to the table does not create independence among them.

The Board's membership is not public. Loeb, who chairs the advisory council that reports to it, has said the identities of Board members are being withheld because some are government employees engaged in classified work, and that

[92] Vincent, Brandi. New Science Advisory Council Forms to Help US Government 'Resolve the UAP Mystery.' *DefenseScoop*, June 17, 2026.

only the Council is open.[93] A decision-making structure whose composition is unknown cannot be held accountable for its decisions, by Congress or by anyone else. The URRB, by contrast, would consist of members nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate, named individuals, publicly vetted, answerable for their determinations.

The Board determines what the scientists are permitted to examine. All data provided to the Science Advisory Council is unclassified.[94] However capable its members, a scientific body restricted to the unclassified record cannot assess the material at the center of the controversy, because that material is precisely what has been classified. The Council can recommend; it cannot compel production, cannot review what it is not shown, and has no route to appeal a decision to withhold. These are not shortcomings of the Council. They are limits set by the body above it, and the URRB was designed to remove them through subpoena authority reaching private entities, access to classified holdings, and a statutory presumption of disclosure that places the burden on those who would withhold.

The distinction is not between good faith and bad faith. Every participant in this structure may intend transparency. The distinction is that one arrangement can be compelled and the other cannot. The Governance Board exists at the pleasure of the executive branch that created it, may be reconstituted or dissolved without legislation, answers to no statutory standard, and applies a classification order it did not write and cannot override.

The Council's position illustrates the point. Give the same researchers statutory access, compulsory process, and a presumption of disclosure, and their work

[93] Bartels, Meghan. The White House Goes All In on Aliens with New UAP Science Advisory Council. *Scientific American*, July 2, 2026.
[94] Loeb, Avi. More Details on the UAP Science Advisory Council. *Medium*, June 16, 2026.

would bear directly on the questions Congress has been unable to answer. What constrains them is not capability or intent. It is that their access is granted rather than guaranteed.

A framework that depends on the continued willingness of the agencies under examination is not oversight. It is cooperation, and cooperation that has been withheld for eight decades is not a foundation on which to build public confidence. What the UAPDA proposes is not a better-intentioned version of the same structure. It is a different structure—one in which the obligation to disclose exists independently of anyone's willingness to honor it.

Classification Standards and Presumption of Disclosure

The UAPDA's most fundamental departure from the status quo is its reversal of the presumption governing UAP records. Under current practice, UAP information is presumptively classified as secret, as mandated by the UAP Security Classification Guide. The UAPDA inverts this: all UAP records carry a presumption of immediate disclosure, and all records should eventually be disclosed so the public can become fully informed about the government's knowledge and involvement.

Postponement of disclosure is permitted only where clear and convincing evidence shows that release would cause specific, defined harms. These include threats to national defense, intelligence operations, or foreign relations of such gravity that they outweigh the public interest in disclosure; risks to living persons who provided confidential information; unwarranted invasions of personal privacy that substantially outweigh public interest; or compromise of confidentiality agreements with cooperating individuals or foreign governments whose disclosure would be so harmful as to outweigh public interest. These are

narrow, defined standards, not the open-ended national security exemptions that have historically enabled blanket classification.

The temporal framework reinforces this presumption. Each UAP record must be publicly disclosed no later than 25 years after its creation, unless the President personally certifies that continued postponement is necessitated by an identifiable harm to military defense, intelligence operations, law enforcement, or foreign relations, and that this harm outweighs the public interest in disclosure. This provision prevents indefinite classification by requiring affirmative presidential action, not passive bureaucratic inertia, to extend secrecy beyond the 25-year threshold. Because government UAP programs are documented from at least 1947, most of the historical record has already exceeded this threshold and should be presumptively disclosed immediately upon enactment.

Where records releases are postponed, that determination is not permanent. They will be subject to periodic review by the originating agency and the Archivist, consistent with the "Controlled Disclosure Campaign Plan." Each continued postponement requires an unclassified written description of the reason, provided to the Archivist and published in the Federal Register. This transparency requirement ensures that even when disclosure is delayed, the facts and rationale for the postponement are public, preventing the kind of silent, indefinite concealment that has characterized UAP secrecy.

The "Controlled Disclosure Campaign Plan"

The UAPDA does not simply mandate the release of records. It requires the URRB to develop and transmit to the President and the Archivist a "Controlled Disclosure Campaign Plan," a benchmark-driven plan recommending precise requirements for periodic review, downgrading, and declassification, as well as

the exact time or specified occurrence following which each postponed item may be appropriately disclosed. The Plan must describe actions taken and justify any postponement, along with the recommended means to disclose each postponed item.

This mechanism is the UAPDA's answer to both indefinite secrecy and mismanaged revelation. It ensures disclosure proceeds on a deliberate schedule, that postponements are justified and time-limited, and that the entire process is documented and available for oversight. The Plan supersedes all prior declassification review standards that may previously have been applied to UAP records, establishing a unified framework where fragmented and often contradictory classification authorities previously prevailed.

The Plan is transmitted to the President, the Archivist, congressional leadership, and the chairs and ranking members of relevant oversight committees. This distribution ensures that both the executive and legislative branches have full visibility into the disclosure process and can exercise their constitutional oversight responsibilities.

Recovery of Materials and Technologies

The UAPDA addresses the critical question of materials and technologies that may be held outside government custody. The Act provides that the federal government shall exercise eminent domain over any recovered TUO and biological evidence of NHI controlled by private persons or entities, in the public interest. Such materials must be made available to the URRB for examination and a subsequent determination on disclosure at a location suitable to the controlling authority.

The URRB is empowered to determine whether examined materials constitute TUO or biological evidence of NHI beyond a reasonable doubt; whether such materials qualify for postponement of disclosure; and what changes to the current disposition of the materials the federal government should make to facilitate full disclosure. The URRB will also have access to all testimony from UAP witnesses, close observers, and legacy program personnel within the government's possession, and may solicit additional witness and whistleblower testimony with appropriate protections.

The provision applies only to recovered technologies of unknown origin and biological evidence of non-human intelligence, a category for which no body of American law has recognized private title. It provides a lawful pathway for the recovery and public stewardship of materials that may currently reside with private contractors beyond the reach of statutory oversight, replacing the opaque arrangements that whistleblower testimony suggests have characterized their handling for decades.

Congressional Oversight

The UAPDA would establish constitutional oversight over UAP and NHI programs where none previously existed, creating clear lines of executive branch and private government contractor accountability to Congress. The Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform would have continuing legislative oversight jurisdiction over both the National Archives and the URRB's official conduct. The URRB would also have an explicit duty to cooperate with this oversight.

The URRB would be required to report annually to congressional leadership, relevant oversight committees, the President, the Archivist, and the heads of

government offices whose records have been reviewed. These reports would include financial accounting, progress on disclosure, estimated timelines for completion, records of compliance and non-compliance by government offices, and recommendations for additional legislative authority. This structured reporting would ensure that congressional oversight is not dependent on ad hoc requests or agency cooperation but is built into the framework as a permanent, recurring obligation.

Disclosure is a Continuing Process

The UAPDA would establish disclosure as a continuing process rather than a one-time event. The URRB would operate within a specified timeframe, unless Congress extends it, but the framework's provisions would endure until the Archivist certifies that all UAP and NHI records have been made available to the public. After the URRB's termination, the AARO, or its likely successor, would be directed to develop standardized UAP and NHI declassification guidance consistent with the "Controlled Disclosure Campaign Plan," ensuring that records generated after the Board's tenure are subject to the same transparency standards.

This continuity provision is essential. It would prevent the disclosure process from stalling when the URRB's term expires and ensure that the presumption of transparency established by the UAPDA becomes a permanent governing norm for UAP- and NHI-related information, rather than a temporary exception that reverts to secrecy when political attention moves on.

The UAPDA, introduced with bipartisan sponsorship and grounded in the proven JFK Records Act model, would provide the institutional architecture required for disclosure management. The framework's components (independent review, presumptive disclosure, enforceable timelines, subpoena authority, eminent

domain, a "Controlled Disclosure Campaign Plan," and robust congressional oversight) are not theoretical preferences. Rather, they are the specific, tested mechanisms necessary to dismantle an eight-decade secrecy regime while maintaining the safeguards that responsible governance demands. The PURSUE experience has demonstrated, in real time, what happens when these mechanisms are absent. The task now is to enact them before the window for managed disclosure closes.

The UAPDA does not address every dimension of the disclosure challenge. The reconciliation processes outlined in Section V, enhanced whistleblower protections tailored to the specific circumstances of UAP legacy program insiders, and the structural reforms necessary to prevent recurrence of the secrecy regime all merit complementary legislative action. But the UAPDA is the essential foundation, the mechanism that creates the independent institutional capacity necessary to achieve these broader objectives.

IX. Addressing Counterarguments

Any governing case for disclosure must confront the arguments historically invoked to justify secrecy. These arguments are not frivolous. Some reflect legitimate concerns that any disclosure framework must address. But none of them, examined carefully, justifies the current regime of indefinite concealment and blanket classification. Properly understood, they define the parameters within which managed disclosure should operate, not reasons to avoid it.

National Security

The most frequently invoked justification for UAP secrecy is national security. The argument takes two forms: that disclosure could reveal vulnerabilities in defense systems or capabilities, and that it could alert adversaries to the extent of U.S. knowledge. These concerns are not trivial, and the UAPDA's framework addresses them through narrow, defined postponement criteria that protect genuinely sensitive information while reversing the presumption of secrecy.

However, the national security argument must be weighed against the security costs of excessive secrecy itself. Senior executive branch officials have acknowledged this directly. The Director of National Intelligence has stated that "deficiencies in the current classification system undermine our national security, as well as critical democratic objectives, by impeding our ability to share information in a timely manner" with intelligence partners, oversight bodies, and the public.[95] The Public Interest Declassification Board, a presidentially appointed advisory body, reached parallel conclusions: "the classification system exists to protect national security, but its outdated design and implementation often hinders that mission. The system is compromised by over-

[95] Avril D. Haines, Director of National Intelligence, Letter to Senator Ron Wyden and Senator Jerry Moran regarding declassification system reform, January 5, 2022, p. 1.

classification and, not coincidentally, by increasing instances of unauthorized disclosures."[96]

The Board identified the root cause as institutional culture rather than individual judgment: "most classification occurs by rote; criteria and agency guidance have not kept pace with the information explosion; and despite the Presidential order to refrain from unwarranted classification, a culture persists that defaults to the avoidance of risk rather than its proper management." In the UAP context, where extreme compartmentalization has persisted for decades, these pathologies have prevented the coordinated, cross-agency analysis that genuine security threats demand, paradoxically increasing vulnerability by fragmenting institutional knowledge and excluding scientific expertise.

The national security argument, honestly assessed, cuts in favor of disclosure rather than against it (see Section IV. State Interests). A system that denies senior officials and congressional oversight bodies access to information about phenomena operating in restricted airspace near nuclear assets is not protecting national security. It is undermining it.

Social Panic

The argument that disclosure could cause widespread panic or social disruption rests on assumptions contradicted by both historical evidence and contemporary data. The most commonly cited precedent, the 1938 "War of the Worlds" radio broadcast allegedly causing mass panic, has been thoroughly debunked by subsequent scholarship. Reports of widespread panic were greatly exaggerated, largely manufactured by newspapers seeking to discredit

[96] Public Interest Declassification Board. Transforming the Security Classification System: Report to the President. November 2012.

radio as a competing medium.[97] The episode actually demonstrates the resilience of public response and the danger of overestimating the potential for disorder.

The polling cited in Section III cuts directly against the panic thesis. A public in which more than eight in ten[98] already believe the government is withholding information is not a public braced for shock. For that overwhelming majority, disclosure would confirm what they already suspect rather than destabilize what they believe. The greater risk to social stability lies in continued secrecy, which feeds conspiracy theories, empowers fringe narratives, and erodes institutional trust, as documented in Section III. A managed disclosure process, conducted through credible institutions with appropriate public communication, would reduce rather than increase the conditions that produce social instability.

Sources and Methods

Protecting intelligence sources and methods is a legitimate concern in any disclosure process. The IC has valid reasons to guard information about collection capabilities, sensor systems, and analytical techniques. However, this concern does not justify blanket secrecy across the entire UAP or NHI domains, and the tools for balancing protection with disclosure are well established.

Much UAP information, including witness testimony, historical documentation, and analysis of phenomenon characteristics, does not reveal sensitive sources and methods. Where genuine concerns exist, redaction and sanitization techniques developed for other declassification contexts can be applied with precision. The JFK Assassination Records Review Board successfully declassified

[97] Pooley, Jefferson and Socolow, Michael J. "The Myth of the War of the Worlds Panic." Slate, October 28, 2013.
[98] De Pinto, Jennifer et al. "CBS News Poll Finds Most Americans Believe Extraterrestrial Life Exists — and Some Think it's Already Here." *CBS News/YouGov*, June 11, 2026.

millions of pages of highly sensitive CIA, NSA, and FBI materials while protecting operational security through targeted redactions.[99] The National Declassification Center has applied the same principle, "releasing all we can, protecting what we must," to millions of pages of Cold War-era records.[100] These precedents show that independent review can distinguish genuine protection needs from pretextual classification.

The passage of time further diminishes this concern. Collection systems from the 1940s through the 1980s, relevant to the vast majority of historical UAP cases, have been superseded by newer technologies. Their disclosure poses little to no operational risk. The sources-and-methods argument, while valid in specific applications, has too often been deployed as a categorical shield against all disclosure, a practice the ACLU has documented extensively across multiple national security domains.[101] Independent review under the UAPDA framework is the mechanism designed to prevent this abuse.

Technological Proliferation

The argument that disclosure could enable adversaries to acquire or replicate advanced technologies rests on several problematic assumptions. It assumes that secrecy has been effective in preventing proliferation. Yet, if multiple nations have recovered UAP materials, as whistleblower testimony suggests, the relevant information may already be more widely distributed than U.S. classification acknowledges. It assumes that knowledge of a technology's existence enables replication, yet if UAP technologies operate according to

[99] See National Archives and Records Administration, John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection, (describing ARRB's declassification of approximately 5 million pages of records from CIA, FBI, NSA, and other agencies); see also discussion of ARRB model in Section VIII above.
[100] About the NDC. National Archives and Records Administration, National Declassification Center.
[101] Drastic Measures Required: Congress Needs to Overhaul U.S. Secrecy Laws and Increase Oversight of the Secret Security Establishment. American Civil Liberties Union, July 2011.

physical principles not currently understood by human science, awareness of their existence provides little practical advantage without the foundational breakthroughs necessary to comprehend them. And it fails to account for the benefits of open scientific engagement, the mechanism through which transformative understanding has historically been achieved.

The Manhattan Project is frequently cited as proof that secret technological development works. But the atomic bomb was based on physics that was publicly known and internationally understood before the project began. The secrecy concerned engineering application, not fundamental science. If UAP-related technologies involve genuinely novel physics, the relevant precedent is not the Manhattan Project but the development of quantum mechanics or general relativity, fields where open discourse and cross-institutional collaboration are proving essential to progress. As the National Academies of Sciences has emphasized, "Openness and sharing of information are fundamental to the progress of science and to the effective functioning of the research enterprise."[102]

Credibility of Evidence

Skeptics argue that the history of misidentifications, hoaxes, and unreliable testimony in the UAP field undermines the evidentiary basis for disclosure. This argument conflates two distinct questions: whether the evidence warrants disclosure and whether the evidence resolves every question about the phenomenon's nature.

The case for disclosure does not require certainty about the origin or nature of every UAP or NHI encounter. It requires recognition that the government

[102] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2018. Open Science by Design: Realizing a Vision for 21st Century Research. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

possesses a substantial body of information, collected by sophisticated sensor systems, documented by credible military and intelligence observers, and corroborated by sworn congressional testimony, that is of legitimate public interest and should be subject to democratic oversight and scientific scrutiny.

The ODNI's 2022 Annual Report analyzed 510 UAP reports and resolved fewer than half as conventional objects, with many others remaining unexplained.[103] The existence of a significant residual of cases that resist conventional explanation, documented by trained observers using military-grade sensors, is not a reason to withhold government data. It is the strongest argument for releasing it, enabling the broader scientific community to apply rigorous analysis to information confined to compartmented programs.

Institutional Credibility

Perhaps the most paradoxical counterargument holds that disclosure would undermine government credibility by revealing decades of concealment, creating a crisis of institutional trust. The paradox is self-evident: it argues that continued secrecy is necessary to protect institutions from the consequences of past secrecy.

In reality, the credibility crisis is already underway. Only 17% of Americans trust the government to do what is right most of the time.[104] Substantial majorities believe information about UAP is being withheld. Credible whistleblowers have testified before Congress about programs operating outside constitutional oversight. Under these conditions, continued secrecy does not preserve institutional credibility; it accelerates its erosion. Each day that concealment

[103] ODNI. "2022 Annual Report on Unidentified Aerial Phenomena." January 12, 2023.
[104] "Just 17% of Americans now say they trust the government in Washington to do what is right 'just about always' (2%) or 'most of the time' (15%)." "Public Trust in Government: 1958-2025." Pew Research Center, December 4, 2025.

persists in the face of mounting evidence and congressional pressure compounds the eventual reckoning.

The reconciliation framework outlined in Section V is specifically designed to address this concern. Honest acknowledgment of what occurred, how secrecy was maintained, what institutional mechanisms enabled it, and what harms resulted, combined with fair treatment of those who operated within the system and structural reforms to prevent recurrence, offers the only credible path to rebuilding public trust. Institutions that demonstrate the capacity for self-correction, even belated self-correction, retain legitimacy. Institutions that cling to concealment in the face of overwhelming evidence do not.

These counterarguments, taken individually and collectively, define the challenges that managed disclosure must navigate. They do not justify more of the same. The UAPDA's framework, with an independent review, narrow postponement criteria, enforceable timelines, and robust oversight, addresses each of these concerns through institutional design rather than through the indefinite continuation of a secrecy regime that has failed on its own terms.

X. Conclusion

This paper presents the case for disclosure of UAP- and NHI-related information held by the U.S. government and its contractors. The case rests on four independent grounds: democratic principle, public interest, state interest, and practical necessity, and collectively, they amount to an overwhelming argument for transparency and reforms.

The democratic case is foundational. The Right to Know is not peripheral to self-governance; it is the condition that makes self-governance possible. When the government withholds information of civilizational significance from the public and its elected representatives for more than 80 years, while conducting campaigns to discredit those seeking the truth, the breach is not merely administrative. Programs have operated outside the notification requirements Congress established. Cleared members of Congress have been denied access to activities they are charged with overseeing. Public funds have sustained those activities beyond the reach of the committees that authorize them. This is a failure of the constitutional structure of oversight, and only Congress can correct it.

The public interest case is concrete and measurable. Civil liberties have been violated through the surveillance of civilian researchers and the systematic stigmatization of witnesses. Public trust has eroded to historic lows, fed by institutional secrecy that citizens increasingly recognize as deliberate concealment. Social cohesion has been damaged as informational vacuums fill with conspiracy theories and competing narratives. And a substantial population of experiencers, individuals who have had direct encounters with the phenomenon, has been denied appropriate healthcare, legal protection, and institutional recognition of their experiences. These are not abstract harms.

Rather, they are ongoing failures of governance with documented consequences for real people.

The state interest case may be the most counterintuitive, but it is no less compelling. A classification regime that prevents coordinated analysis and denies senior officials and congressional oversight bodies access to information about phenomena operating in restricted airspace weakens national security, not strengthens it. Technological competitiveness is undermined when potentially transformative knowledge in energy, propulsion, and materials science is sequestered behind need-to-know barriers that have been extended far beyond their original purposes. Alliance relationships are strained when partners conducting parallel investigations perceive that the U.S. is withholding significant information. Crisis stability is also jeopardized when the absence of transparent frameworks leaves the government unprepared for incidents that could trigger miscalculation or escalation.

The practical case is defined by urgency. The convergence of unauthorized leak risks, foreign government disclosure incentives, undeniable public event probabilities, AI-driven analytical capabilities proliferating beyond government control, and executive-directed document releases conducted without institutional architecture is compressing the timeline for chaotic revelation. The PURSUE program has demonstrated in real time what transparency looks like without the independent review, contextual analysis, and structured processes that managed disclosure requires. The question is not whether information will reach the public. It is whether that information will arrive through a lawful, accountable process or through a breach that maximizes confusion and minimizes institutional capacity to respond.

This paper has also argued that disclosure must be understood comprehensively, not as a document release but as a transformation in governing posture encompassing four dimensions: the release of information and evidence, an honest historical reckoning with how the secrecy regime was constructed and maintained, including any actions that caused direct harm to individuals, a reconciliation process that distinguishes among those who need only release from secrecy obligations, those who require assurance that good-faith cooperation will be recognized, and those whose conduct demands formal evaluation, and structural reforms that prevent recurrence. That process must begin by protecting those who have already come forward at personal risk, before extending pathways to those who maintained silence. A disclosure process that addresses some of these dimensions while ignoring others will be incomplete and will fail to restore the democratic governance it purports to serve.

The UAPDA provides the legislative foundation for this process. Its independent Review Board, presumption of disclosure, enforceable timelines, subpoena authority, eminent domain provisions, "Controlled Disclosure Campaign Plan," and robust congressional oversight mechanisms constitute the institutional architecture that managed disclosure requires. The establishment of the UAP Governance Board and Science Advisory Council in June 2026, while well-intentioned, further illustrates the limitation of executive-branch alternatives: an entity cannot supply independent review of itself, and advisory bodies whose access is granted by the agencies under scrutiny rather than guaranteed by statute cannot substitute for the independent, Senate-confirmed authority the UAPDA would provide.

The UAPDA does not address every dimension of the challenge, including reconciliation, enhanced whistleblower protections, and structural reform of the

classification system, which merit complementary legislative action. Still, it is the essential first step without which none of these broader objectives can be achieved.

The evidentiary record supporting disclosure continues to grow. It includes sworn congressional testimony from officials whose government positions are documented and who testified under their own names. It includes whistleblower allegations that the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community determined credible and urgent under the applicable statutory standard, requiring their transmission to the congressional oversight committees, where they remain unresolved. It includes official acknowledgments that UAP are real physical phenomena warranting systematic investigation. It includes documented injuries sustained by military personnel present at UAP incidents, some of whom have received service-connected disability determinations. And it includes a legislative record in which Congress has written the terms "non-human intelligence" and "technologies of unknown origin" into federal legislation.

The counterarguments to disclosure, including national security, social panic, sources and methods, technological proliferation, evidentiary credibility, and institutional stability, have been examined and found insufficient to justify continued concealment. Each identifies a legitimate concern that a managed disclosure framework must navigate. None justifies indefinitely maintaining a secrecy regime that has operated outside constitutional oversight, suppressed foundational scientific knowledge, harmed the individuals most directly affected by the phenomenon, and eroded public trust in democratic institutions.

The political landscape has shifted. Bipartisan coalitions in the Senate have introduced the UAPDA four years in a row. Congressional hearings have produced testimony that would have been unimaginable a decade ago. The executive branch has begun releasing files, however inadequately. Public opinion has moved decisively toward demanding transparency. The scientific community is beginning to engage. Many conditions for legislative action exist. What remains elusive is the will to act.

That will to act must come from multiple directions. From elected officials willing to prioritize disclosure over institutional deference. From the scientific community willing to bring rigorous methodologies to questions that have been too long dismissed without adequate investigation. From media organizations willing to report with seriousness and context rather than sensationalism or reflexive skepticism. From citizens willing to insist that their government level with them about matters that concern the fundamental nature of reality and humanity's place within it. And from those within the system, the individuals who have carried the burden of extraordinary knowledge under enforced silence, who may find in a managed disclosure process the conditions necessary to come forward and contribute their testimony to the historical record.

The argument this paper has made is that a body of evidence sufficient to compel congressional attention has been placed beyond congressional reach. The question that remains is whether the U.S. will confront it through a lawful, transparent, and accountable process, or continue to defer until events force disclosure on terms that serve no one.

The Right to Know is not a request. It is the foundational compact between a democratic government and the people it serves. The provisions that would honor it, an independent Review Board, a presumption of disclosure,

enforceable timelines, and authority reaching materials held outside government custody have been introduced in four consecutive Congresses and blocked three times, never defeated on their merits. They should be restored and retained. And the members who make that determination should be prepared to explain it on the record.