

Ryan Graves / Americans for Safe Aerospace Written Testimony

Chairman Grothman, Ranking Member Garcia, distinguished Members of the House Oversight Subcommittee on National Security, the Border, and Foreign Affairs, Representatives Burchett and Luna, thank you for holding the first public hearing on UAP to hear from military pilots and whistleblowers.

My name is Ryan “FOBS” Graves and I am a former F-18 pilot with over a decade of service in the U.S. Navy, including two deployments in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Inherent Resolve. I have witnessed advanced UAP on multiple sensor systems firsthand, and I'm here to voice the concerns of countless commercial aircrew and military veterans who have confided their similar encounters with me.

I can tell you that advanced UAP are a national security and an aviation safety problem.

It has been more than a decade since my squadron began witnessing advanced UAP demonstrating complex maneuvers on a regular basis, and we still don't have answers. I founded Americans for Safe Aerospace to create a center of support, research, and public education for aircrew impacted by UAP encounters. We now have nearly 5,000 members and are actively working with more than 30 UAP witnesses who have approached us. I am also the Chair of the UAP Integration & Outreach Committee for the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, where we have assembled a volunteer team of almost 80 PhDs and aerospace engineers dedicated to tackling the science around this issue.

Today, I would like to center our discussion around three critical issues that demand our immediate attention and concerted action:

1. **As we convene here, UAP are in our airspace, but they are grossly underreported.** These sightings are not rare or isolated; they are routine. Military aircrews and commercial pilots, trained observers whose lives depend on accurate identification, are frequently witnessing these phenomena.
2. **The stigma attached to UAP is real and powerful and challenges national security.** It silences commercial pilots who fear professional repercussions, discourages witnesses, and is only compounded by recent government claims questioning the credibility of eyewitness testimony.
3. **The government knows more about UAP than shared publicly, and excessive classification practices keep crucial information hidden.** There's a lack of transparency around UAP that's unsettling. Since 2021, all UAP videos are classified as secret or above. This level of secrecy not only impedes our understanding but fuels speculation and mistrust.

My experience: UAP encounters in W-72

I joined the U.S. Navy in 2009. As a pilot, I was trained to be an expert observer, tasked with identifying any aircraft within our operating area. In 2014, I was near Virginia Beach as part of VFA-11, a Navy Fighter/Attack Squadron made up of F/A-18F Super Hornets. Upon an upgrade to our radar system, we began to detect unknown objects in our airspace. Initially dismissed as software glitches, we soon corroborated these radar tracks with infrared sensors, confirming their physical presence.

Over time, UAP sightings became an open secret among our aircrew. They were a common occurrence, seen by most of my colleagues on radar and occasionally up close. The sightings were so frequent that they became part of daily briefs.

A pivotal incident occurred during an air combat training mission in Warning Area W-72, an exclusive block of airspace ten miles east of Virginia Beach. All traffic into the training area goes through a single GPS point at a set altitude. Just at the moment the two jets crossed the threshold, one of the pilots saw a dark gray cube inside of a clear sphere — motionless against the wind, fixed directly at the entry point. The jets, only 100 feet apart, were forced to take evasive action. They terminated the mission immediately and returned to base. Our squadron submitted a safety report, but there was no official acknowledgement of the incident and no further mechanism to report the sightings.

Advanced UAP defy conventional explanation

The UAP we encountered and tracked on multiple sensors behaved in ways that surpassed our understanding and technology. The UAP could accelerate at speeds up to Mach 1, hold their position against hurricane-force winds, and outlast our fighter jets, operating continuously throughout the day. They did not have any visible means of lift, control surfaces or propulsion — nothing that resembled normal aircraft with wings, flaps or engines. I am a formally trained engineer and I have no explanation for this.

Recently, I have received confirmation that these encounters were also a shock to the chain of command from one of our advisors at ASA, Rear Admiral Tim Gallaudet, former head of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Oceanographer of the Navy.

While serving as an Admiral with Fleet Forces Command, he received a classified email on SIPRNET in 2015 from his boss, the Operations Commander, to all 1- and 2-star Admiral subordinates. The title of the email was “Urgent safety of flight issue.” He attached the now famous GO-FAST UAP video from a Navy F/A-18, asking if anyone knew their origin, and expressed safety of flight concerns about multiple near mid-air collisions with UAP in the early warning area off Virginia Beach where my encounters occurred, noting they might shut down the exercise for safety reasons.

Admiral Gallaudet reviewed it with his deputy. The next day, the email was removed from his system and that of his deputy, and despite meeting with this group routinely in person, no one ever discussed it. He presumes the email was removed in connection with a classified special

access program. He couldn't believe there was no discussion of an urgent safety of flight issue. He has stated publicly that after seeing the report, he didn't believe these UAP represent any known human technology.

Aircrews along the East Coast continue to encounter advanced UAP nearly a decade later, and the identity of these UAP remains unknown.

Americans for Safe Aerospace aircrew and military UAP witness program

Recognizing the need for action and answers, I founded Americans for Safe Aerospace, which now has nearly 5,000 members. What I did not anticipate was how many UAP military veteran and commercial aircrew witnesses would reach out to us. The organization has since become a haven for more than 30 UAP witnesses who were previously unspoken due to the absence of a safe intake process. Most do not want to speak publicly. They are afraid of professional consequences. They just want to add their account to the data set.

Commercial pilots

The majority of witnesses are commercial pilots at major airlines. What commercial pilots tell us can defy belief, often beginning with an apology like "I apologize, I realize this will sound crazy." They describe UAP operating at altitudes that appear to be above them at 40,000 feet, potentially in low earth orbit or in the grey zone below the Karman line, making inexplicable maneuvers, like right hand turns and retrograde orbits, or j-hooks. Sometimes these reports are recurring, with numerous recent sightings north of Hawaii and the North Atlantic. They are trained observers, often former military pilots with decades of flying experience, who say they understand Starlink flares and are adamant that is not the explanation.

Other domain military witnesses

Other veterans are also coming forward to us regarding UAP encounters in our airspace and oceans. Veterans from all branches of service, who are authorized to come forward by the NDAA of 2023 to Congress and the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office, are hesitant to do so due to stigma and a confusing process within government. Currently, there is no public-facing way for them to report their accounts. We are filling that gap.

The most compelling involve observations of UAP by multiple witnesses and sensor systems, with supporting documentation or a roadmap to find it. I believe these accounts are only scratching the surface and more will share their experiences once it is safe to do so. In multiple cases, contemporaneous notifications were made up the chain of command, and in several, sensor data was escalated for analysis and there were profound irregularities in how the data was handled.

Conclusion:

There are credible reports from both military and commercial aircrew of unidentified objects in our military and commercial airspace occurring with regularity.

The UAP Task Force reported in 2021 that there were 11 near misses with UAP and I understand that number has grown.¹ In April 2022, the FAA issued an alert to its operation managers that a commercial aircraft over West Virginia experienced a double attitude and double autopilot failure while flying under a UAP. Stigma surrounding UAP should not undermine the seriousness of this domain awareness gap.

If UAP are foreign drones, it is an urgent national security problem. If it is something else, it is an issue for science. In either case, it is a concern for safety of flight.

Next steps:

To identify and evaluate the nature and intent of UAP we need (1) accurate reporting to determine scope, (2) empowered, unbiased investigation authority, (3) a transparent process to share the findings and data publicly to be studied by scientists.

Commercial pilot reporting

Today, FAA regulations direct pilots to make UAP reports to civilian organizations. Commercial aircrew who witness UAP are extremely frustrated that there is no reporting system for UAP and no protections against retaliation. They are hesitant to discuss anything “weird” on the radio with air traffic control or in any official company forum, and are only more recently talking freely amongst themselves. They are afraid of professional consequences and they deserve protection.

The absence of UAP reporting for commercial pilots creates a domain awareness gap in our airspace. If China is operating advanced UAP near Hawaii, and commercial pilots are observing it routinely, today there is no way to connect those dots.

Empowered, unbiased investigation into UAP

We need to restore decades of mistrust with the public and UAP witnesses. My lived experience over the past few months has been that as stigma is pushed back and witnesses develop trust in the process, remarkable accounts begin to emerge. The All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office is supposed to serve as a central clearing house for the analysis of UAP incidents, but it must have the authority it needs to do its job and it must build trust with witnesses. Director, Dr. Sean Kirkpatrick said in the recent NASA Independent Study Team meeting that “metallic orbs” traveling up to Mach 2 with no visible lifting surface or propulsion are being seen all over the world, but that AARO needs access to scientifically calibrated instruments to evaluate these UAP. Dr. Kirkpatrick has also indicated that eyewitness testimony isn’t considered credible on its own.

¹<https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/Preliminary-Assessment-UAP-20210625.pdf>

We also heard him say in testimony to Congress that he only operated under Title 10 authority, and that additional authorities related to Title 50 would help AARO execute its mission. In the NASA IST public meeting he elaborated he needs access to the scientifically calibrated sensors available to the intelligence community that can characterize UAP, and my understanding is that he would need it to proactively investigate witness accounts.

However, last week, in his first public interview, he indicated he has what he needs. I am unsure why or if his statement has changed. He also indicates with respect to witnesses, that he “believes them now.” I respect the challenge of the role and the obligations of a scientist to speak responsibly on this issue, but the American people want straight forward communication.

Declassification and scientific research

There are two different conversations happening regarding UAP because of overclassification of UAP data. The government has compelling UAP data that is only being disclosed in classified settings. If everyone could see the sensor and video data that I have, there is no doubt in my mind that UAP would be a top priority for our defense, intelligence, and scientific communities.

My understanding is that all UAP videos since 2021 are classified Secret or above, which prevents the American people and even some Members of Congress from seeing UAP videos like the full GIMBAL video and radar data recorded by my squadron. In the aftermath of the PRC spy balloon and the recalibration of NORAD radar filters, the American people still want to know why three UAP were shot down over several days as a threat to civilian air traffic. What were they? If they posed a threat to commercial air traffic, why is nothing else being done? The overclassification of UAP data prevents us from a true scientific investigation to get answers. The bottom line is, why are we allowing objects in our sky, particularly objects displaying advanced technology, to go unidentified? I believe we should pursue these questions about the nature of UAP with a scientific method and an open mind.

In closing, thank you for your leadership today on this important issue. The American people deserve to know what is happening in our skies. It is long overdue.

Thank you.