

14th May, 1985

David Alton, Esq., MP,
House of Commons,
Westminster,
London SW1

Dear Mr. Alton,

Section 40 has kept me informed about her correspondence with you on the unusual incidents which were reported to the Ministry of Defence by USAF authorities at RAF Woodbridge in January 1981. I have also seen Lord Trefgarne's letters to you of 19th March.

Section 40 decided to write further to you about this puzzling and disquieting case, and she referred to me her enclosed letter of 31st March, which is addressed to you, in the hope that I might be able to add useful comments. Much to my regret I have had to spend much time out of London on other business in recent weeks and it is only now that I am able, very belatedly, to send on **Section 40** letter to you.

My own background, in brief, is that I served in the Ministry of Defence from 1949 to 1977, leaving in the grade of Under Secretary of State. From 1969 to late in 1972 I headed a Division in the central staffs of the MOD which had responsibilities for supporting RAF operations. This brought me into touch with a proportion of the many reports which the Department receives about unidentified traces in British airspace.

I believe that **Section 40** is right to remain very dissatisfied with the official line which the MOD has adopted on the Rendlesham Forest incidents of December 1980. I have myself said so on a number of public occasions, and I have pursued the matter in correspondence with the MOD - wholly without success.

At the risk of burdening you with an excessive amount of paper, I attach the most recent of my letters to the Ministry of Defence. You will see that this is dated 25th February 1985. I have so far received no answer, despite reminders. On a previous occasion it took the Department three and a half months to send me a wholly perfunctory reply.

Section 40 claims much collateral evidence for her own views; on this I am not competent to comment. My own position is, quite simply, that an extraordinary report was made to the Ministry of Defence by the Deputy Base Commander at RAF Woodbridge early in 1981; that the very existence of this report was denied by the MOD until persistent researchers in the US secured its release under the American Freedom of Information Act in 1983; and that the MOD's responses to questions since that time have been thoroughly unsatisfactory.

I cannot accept Lord Trefgarne's view that there is no Defence interest in this case. Unless Lt.Col. Halt was out of his mind, there is clear evidence in his report that British airspace and territory were intruded upon by an unidentified vehicle on two occasions in late December 1980 and that no authority was able to prevent this. If, on the other hand, Halt's report cannot be believed, there is equally clear evidence of a serious misjudgement of events by USAF personnel at an important base in British territory. Either way, the

case can hardly be without Defence significance.

The dates in question are now rather remote, but I doubt that this should be taken to excuse the very perfunctory manner in which Lord Trefgarne has dealt with your letter. I hope that you may feel able to pursue the matter further, either in correspondence or in a PQ. The essence of the questions to be pressed seems to me to lie in my preceding paragraph. Seen in these terms, **Section 40** article in the GUARDIAN (which Lord Trefgarne rather surprisingly falls back upon) is wholly irrelevant. If the USAF really are capable of hallucinations induced by a lighthouse which must surely be very familiar to them, then I shudder for that powerful finger which lies upon so many triggers...

My own letter to the MOD (enclosed) raises other more detailed questions. But I do not suggest that you should necessarily concern yourself with them, anyway at this stage. It would be nice if the MOD would answer letters, of course ! But the essence of the Defence interest which I suggest a responsible Member of Parliament might reasonably raise lies in the argument I have tried to present above.

If I can be of any assistance in discussion with you, I am at your disposal.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ralph Noyes". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized hand.

(Ralph Noyes)