



INTELLIGENCE

## OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

5000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-5000

### INFO MEMO

#### MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

FROM: Garry Reid, Director for Defense Intelligence, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence

SUBJECT: (U) Response to Your Questions on the Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program (AATIP) and Actions of Former DoD Employee Luis Elizondo

(U//~~FOUO~~) **BLUF:** This memorandum provides responds to your six questions regarding the actions of former DoD employee Luis Elizondo. Responses to your questions on the AATIP are in the classified enclosure. The U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) is conducting an inquiry to determine if Mr. Elizondo mishandled classified information.

- (U//~~FOUO~~) Question 1: "I want to know more about his abrupt resignation – why?" Response: Mr. Elizondo has provided three different explanations for his sudden resignation. On October 3<sup>rd</sup> he told his direct supervisor he was resigning because he had a fleeting job opportunity that required his immediate availability. In a memorandum dated October 4<sup>th</sup> he cited his concerns over inaction within the Department over "anomalous aerospace threats" as the reason for his resignation. On October 6<sup>th</sup>, via a phone call, he told me he resigned because his job was too stressful on his family.
- (U//~~FOUO~~) Question 2: "Did CI immediately review?" Response: Yes. We referred the timing and circumstances of Mr. Elizondo's resignation to the AFOSI. Their informal assessment did not find any wrongdoing by Mr. Elizondo, and absent any indicators of misconduct, they were unable to open a formal investigation.
- (U//~~FOUO~~) Question 3: "Was subject "read-out" of all classified responsibilities between his Oct 3 notification/resignation letter and his departure 24 hours later?" Response: Yes. Mr. Elizondo completed all administrative and security related out-processing, including formal debriefs for all SAPs, SCI, and compartmented programs.
- (U//~~FOUO~~) Question 4: "What was the "uncertain provenance" you refer to regarding subject second letter/MFR?" Response: The letter was hand delivered to the USDI Chief of Staff office by someone other than Mr. Elizondo. The letter is not consistent with the first resignation letter Mr. Elizondo personally handed his supervisor. After my phone call with Mr. Elizondo, in which he said he had been secretly working for the Secretary, I checked with two senior officials that have knowledge of special programs; our collective assessment

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was that Mr. Elizondo's claims were not credible, and the letter was not worthy of the Secretary's personal attention.

- (U// [REDACTED]) Question 5: "Has the "Navy civilian" been interviewed about the declassification?" Response: Yes. USDI staff contacted him upon discovery of the SIPRnet email sent to him by Mr. Elizondo. He informed us that he told Mr. Elizondo that he was not the declassification release authority, and took no further action.
- Question 6: "What is a "deferred" retirement?" Response: "Deferred Retirement" refers to delayed payment of benefits until certain criteria are met. Deferred retirement applies to those with at least five years of Federal service who depart before reaching their Minimum Retirement Age (MRA) – which is between ages 55-57, depending on year of birth. Those with 5 years can opt to collect retirement benefits as early as age 62; those with 10 years can collect at their MRA but will sacrifice 5% for each year they are under 62.

Attachments:

As stated





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## INFO MEMO

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD *12/27*FROM: Garry Reid, Director for Defense Intelligence, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence *GR*

SUBJECT: (U) Update on Media Reporting Related to the Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program (AATIP) and Actions of Former DoD Employee Luis Elizondo

(U/ *[redacted]*) BLUF: This memorandum summarizes recent media interest in the AATIP, which has been accentuated by the public statements of former DoD employee Luis Elizondo, who has aggrandized his role in the program. We are collecting facts regarding Mr. Elizondo's actual role in the AATIP, reviewing the program's history with DIA, Navy, and Air Force, and pursuing options to investigate Mr. Elizondo's possible mishandling of sensitive information. *11*

- (U/ *[redacted]*) Mr. Elizondo was assigned to OUSDI from September 28, 2008 to October 4, 2017. He served as an action officer in Partner Engagement, and subsequently as a branch chief managing classified information to support the Office of Military Commissions. To the best of my knowledge, he had no job responsibilities related to the AATIP. The AATIP was terminated in 2012. An information paper on the program is at Tab A. *!!*
- (U/ *[redacted]*) On October 3, 2017, Mr. Elizondo submitted a resignation letter (Tab B) requesting immediate termination of his employment. He was cleared out of USDI the next day. He provided no reason for the sudden departure. *!! C-INTELL ALARM*
- (U/ *[redacted]*) On or about October 4, after Mr. Elizondo had departed the organization, a second resignation letter (Tab C) was delivered to the USDI Chief of Staff office. In this letter, which is formatted as a "Memorandum for Record" but uses the salutation "Mr. Secretary," Mr. Elizondo cites concerns over anomalous aerospace threats as the basis for his resignation. Given the uncertain provenance of the second letter, OUSDI retained a copy but did not provide it to the SecDef office. *?*
- (U/ *[redacted]*) In a phone call on October 5, when asked about the second letter, Mr. Elizondo told me that for many years he had been secretly tasked by the Secretary of Defense as the program manager for investigating UFOs and other aerial threats. He said nobody in USDI was cleared for this program and would not discuss it further. I discussed his claims with senior officials who would likely have known of such an arrangement, but was unable to substantiate them.

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- (U/ [REDACTED]) On October 12, I learned of a video featuring Mr. Elizondo that was posted on YouTube by the "To the Stars Academy for Arts and Sciences," which appears to be his current employer. He asserts "for nearly the last decade I ran a sensitive Aerospace Threat Identification Program focusing on unidentified aerial technologies," and later says "we are (also) planning to provide never before released footage from real US government systems."
- (U/ [REDACTED]) Following discovery of the YouTube video, I requested an informal review of Mr. Elizondo's conduct by the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI), which is responsible for providing investigative support to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), including investigation of assigned personnel. In late November AFOSI advised that absent more tangible indicators of possible misconduct they did not have enough information to open a case on Mr. Elizondo. ✓
- (U/ [REDACTED]) On December 7, DoD was contacted by the New York Times (NYT) seeking information regarding the AATIP and noting that Mr. Elizondo's recent resignation was submitted "to protest what he characterized as internal opposition and lack of resources for continued research." ✓
- (U/ [REDACTED]) On December 15, based on information contained in the NYT inquiry, I notified the OUSDI Security Officer that Mr. Elizondo may have misused government systems and may intend to release USG footage or information that he obtained during his employment with OUSD (I). ✓
- (U/ [REDACTED]) On December 17, Mr. Elizondo appeared on national news programs providing commentary on a video that appears to be camera footage taken by a US military aircraft showing what he claims is an unidentified flying object. In the TV interview, Mr. Elizondo affirms his alleged role in leading the AATIP program and says "we are not alone..." ✓
- (U/ [REDACTED]) On December 18, OUSDI located a classified email generated by Mr. Elizondo in August 2017, in which he requested assistance from a Navy civilian \* employee to declassify one or more videos. The video attached to the email is the same footage broadcast on national news on December 17. The email chain is incomplete, so we have yet to determine if the video was properly declassified, what process was followed, and how it ended up in the possession of the national media. We continue to research these email transactions.
- (U/ [REDACTED]) On December 21, I met with AFOSI agents to initiate a formal inquiry into Mr. Elizondo's possible mishandling of classified materials. ✓

WHO IS INVESTIGATING?  
AFOSI?  
IF SO, ARE THEY LOOKING INTO THE REQUESTOR?  
SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME?

Attachments:  
As stated

Prepared By: Garry Reid, OSDI, (b)(6)

October 3, 2017

ATTN: OUSD(I)

Effective 4 October 2017, I humbly submit my resignation as Director, National Programs Special Management Staff, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence. In this regard, I understand I will no longer be an employee of the U.S. Government. I respectfully request I receive a "deferred retirement".

Very Respectfully,



Luis D. Elizondo

*John Berry III*  
3 Oct '17





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MEMORANDUM FOR: RECORD

SUBJECT: Letter of Resignation & Differed Retirement

Mr. Secretary:

It has been my sincere honor and pleasure to have served with some of America's finest men and women in both peace time and in war. For over 22 years, I have been blessed to learn from, and work with world-class leadership, you certainly being among the very best.

With that in mind, bureaucratic challenges and inflexible mindsets continue to plague the Department at all levels. This is particularly true regarding the controversial topic of anomalous aerospace threats. Despite overwhelming evidence at both the unclassified and classified levels, certain individuals in the Department remain staunchly opposed to further research on what could be a tactical threat to our pilots, sailors, and soldiers, and perhaps even an existential threat to our national security. In many instances, there seems to be a direct correlation the phenomena exhibits with respect to our nuclear and military capabilities. The Department must take serious the many accounts by the Navy and other Services of unusual aerial systems interfering with military weapon platforms and displaying beyond next generation capabilities. Underestimating or ignoring these potential threats is not in the best interest of the Department no matter the level of political contention. There remains a vital need to ascertain capability and intent of these phenomena for the benefit of the armed forces and the nation.

For this reason, effective 4 October 2017, I humbly submit my resignation in hopes it will encourage you to ask the hard questions: "who else knows?", "what are their capabilities?", and "why aren't we spending more time and effort on the issue?". As I transition to a new chapter of my life, please know it has been an honor and privilege of a lifetime to serve with you. Rest assure, no matter where the path of life may lead me, I will always have the best interest of the Department and the American people as my guiding principle.

Luis D. Elizondo  
Director  
National Programs Special Management Staff  
OUSD(I)



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