

Transcript: Colloquium on research into unidentified aerospace phenomena beyond fantasy

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Pierre Henriet (Member of Parliament, National Assembly) — Introduction

Very well, ladies and gentlemen. Arnaud Saint-Martin and I are delighted to welcome you this afternoon, here in the Victor Hugo room, to this colloquium entitled "Research into unidentified aerospace phenomena beyond fantasy." There's an experience we've all had: looking up at the sky one evening, spotting a light whose distance, nature and trajectory we can't determine, and being left for a moment with this question, quite simple after all: what is it? Most of the time an explanation comes — a plane, a planet, a satellite, a weather balloon. But sometimes it doesn't. And it is those cases, that resistant fraction, that we'll be discussing this afternoon. The subject invites a smile, and we know it. If so many of you are here, ladies and gentlemen of the press, it's no doubt because it's an original topic with that whiff of the unusual that makes for good headlines. Ever since we announced this colloquium, we've observed the media coverage, which duly followed the stereotypes: the little flying saucers as illustrations, the knowing winks. We don't complain about it, we smile along with you. But that is precisely why this file needed to come out of specialist forums and be placed here, in a chamber of the National Assembly, and examined calmly. Not to settle a mystery, but to raise a serious question. How does public authority organise the study of observations that remain unexplained to this day? Because behind the culture — cinematic in particular, yesterday and today — there is a serious reality. Pilots, both civilian and military, report observations. States — the United States foremost, again these very last days — declassify documents and set up dedicated bodies. And France, without fanfare, has for decades had within CNES a public service, GEIPAN, tasked with collecting and analysing these reports. The topic is therefore already, like it or not, a matter of public policy. The only question is whether we handle it methodically or whether we leave it to fantasy. This is where our two backgrounds come in. I trained as a mathematician and epistemologist, and Arnaud Saint-Martin is a sociologist of science. What our disciplines share is a common refusal: to conflate the seriousness of a question with the seriousness of the answers so far given to it. A phenomenon may be little studied, surrounded by stories and speculation, and yet still constitute a perfectly legitimate object of investigation. The history of science is full of objects long deemed unworthy of attention that later turned out to be fruitful. That is the whole point of the title we chose: "Beyond fantasy." Not against beliefs — we are not gathered here to freeze them out. Nor in their favour — we're not here to endorse them either, but beyond. That is, by distinguishing the phenomenon we observe from the interpretations layered onto it. When we speak of unidentified phenomena, we're describing the state of our knowledge, not the nature of the thing. "Unidentified" is not a verdict of "inexplicable"; it is the provisional acknowledgement of work that remains to be done. That is why, as members

both of the Parliamentary Office for the Evaluation of Scientific and Technological Choices, we had the idea for this colloquium. It seemed useful to bring together today, at this crossroads, researchers, engineers, military personnel, public officials, and observers who, each in their own way, take this file seriously. Let them all be warmly thanked here and now. Before opening our proceedings, I hand over to Arnaud Saint-Martin. He will say better than I why we thought it right to take this on. Thank you.

Arnaud Saint-Martin (Member of Parliament, National Assembly) — Welcome

Welcome to the Victor Hugo room for this unprecedented colloquium. It's a first meeting of its kind. Let's say it up front. What is striking about the UFO file is that, as you said, it elicits highly contrasting, often ambivalent judgments and feelings — here too, in fact. We alternate between astonishment, surprise, sometimes a smirk, derision, but also pronounced interest. Regardless of interests or party affiliations. Some of my colleagues have asked me, mixing curiosity and unease: "But do you believe in it?" Why such a colloquium? What's the point? Each time, I've answered: whether I believe or not is not the question. And with good reason. As you said, sociologist of science and technology in another life, on leave, I trained in the sociological approach to controversies about knowledge deemed non-standard, unestablished, of fragile epistemic legitimacy — in short, the pariahs of knowledge. The UFO file is a fine analyser from that point of view. Rather than passing judgment, the idea is to investigate those who are conducting the investigation. By suspending judgment, one ends up learning a great deal about others and about ourselves. The epistemologist MP Pierre Henriet, here today, with whom I'm organising this colloquium, is on the same wavelength. But to be clear: as soon as one investigates these phenomena as such, and no longer the investigators, it's another matter. It requires resorting to prospecting methods, detection techniques, fact-establishment, building databases, taxonomies, preserving testimonies, articulating concepts and theories, and above all, providing evidence. Then not everything holds up. Approaches that are by turns intriguing or seductive, wacky or exotic, would not pass the test of veridiction. Or at the very least, these hypotheses would singularly lack factual guarantee, leaving only the certainty of a subjective observation. The whole point of this colloquium is to look at approaches that take this range of phenomena seriously, without blinkers, with rigour. How? Well, our wager is to give perspective and value to a French heritage of research on UAP, including UFOs. Calling on the insights of CNES's Group for the Study and Information on UAP was self-evident to us. Founded almost 50 years ago — I'm not going to give the whole history, I skip to SEPRA — after various initiatives at the interface of science, engineering and airspace surveillance, this unit holds masses of data, investigation results, expertise and methodologies robustly tested against hundreds of cases. As with the techniques used by the military, which will be the theme of the second round table. Taking on this framing already means going against the grain of a certain conventional construction of the phenomenon, one haunted by American production. Despite UAP being observed just about everywhere on the globe, according to the National UFO Reporting Center, 141,000 out of 160,000 events recorded occurred in the United States. 89% of all reports. That is a striking regularity — and by contrast, it invites us to broaden our gaze and acknowledge that things also happen in France and on the old continent. That is the whole point of the first round table: to put things in anthropological and historical perspective. The study, from within France, of this body of practices and approaches will be the subject of this first round table. So why do two MPs think it right to organise a colloquium on the study of UAP? You gave some reasons, Pierre; I'll continue trying to spell them out. First, because — let's admit

it — it draws public interest, and that in itself justifies looking into it, for the first time, right here. Recall that when CNES put 400 case files online on its website in March 2007, the agency's site was besieged. It almost caused the site to collapse. Space exploration is of interest, that's certain, and it's a question I'm personally passionate about — but it must be put in perspective against the popular fascination with UFOs that anyone can observe in their surroundings at the turn of a conversation. And ever since we launched the idea of the colloquium, we've been literally besieged with messages in our parliamentary inboxes. Something anyone can observe around them — even more so these last few years, between declassifications of files and documents once secret from the Pentagon. We'll come back to it in the third round table, but also the controversial speculations of an astrophysicist, Avi Loeb, the film productions that feed the extraterrestrial imagination — I'm thinking in particular of Steven Spielberg's latest film — this taste for the uncanny strangeness of the UFO finds constant renewal. Opinion polls are rare in France, compared with the United States, which does this all the time, but according to the latest surveys — I found one, an IFOP poll commissioned by the US Embassy in France in 2023 — slightly more than one French person in four is convinced UFOs exist. I imagine with a somewhat biased questionnaire. Suffice it to say it attests, in any case, to a non-trivial persistence of this question. You will have understood that our aim will not be to sort through beliefs, as you said, to lean toward one approach at the expense of another, to take part in the controversies among ufologists, of which there are many, but to see to it that this file is opened within a chamber of the National Assembly. And to see what comes out of it, without leaping ahead. The idea is, to borrow a heuristic strategy proposed by sociologist Robert Merton, to specify our ignorance — that is, to take stock and give ourselves the means to make explicit our knowledge of what is not yet known, but ought to be, so as to lay the groundwork for other knowledge. No suspense: we'll have occasion to confirm, through the round tables of this colloquium, that we are not starting from scratch and that there is room for progress. This colloquium is therefore intended to take stock, to propose avenues, possibly recommendations — and each speaker at the podium will be free to set out their views with full knowledge of the facts. Before we begin, allow me to thank and applaud our teams — Pierre's and mine — who have spared no effort, believe me, to ensure that this rather heavy-to-organise colloquium could take place under the best conditions. Thank you. And without further ado, we're going to start with a first round table. I ask Pierre Lagrange and Luc Dini to come to the stage, and we'll have a first presentation from Jérôme Lamy and Dominique Pinsolle by videoconference. They couldn't be here today, unfortunately, but they are with us for the first segment. After that, we'll give the mic to Pierre and then Luc.

Jérôme Lamy (sociologist of science, CESSP)

So, Mr Lamy and Mr Pinsolle, you have the floor. We'll test your mic if we can. Yes, you can hear me? Yes. Can you hear me? Perfectly. Over to you. Please go ahead. Thank you very much. So, with Dominique, we have been conducting since January 2026 a socio-historical study of the Group for the Study and Information on unidentified aerospace phenomena — GEIPAN — a body founded in 1977 within the National Centre for Space Studies, CNES. This research that we've undertaken is therefore funded by CNES within the framework of its annual call for projects. We are particularly interested in the formation of GEIPAN, its practices, its expertise processes and its communication mechanisms. Our position on the subject is simple: there is an interest for the social sciences in seriously studying an object like GEIPAN, because it allows us to raise essential questions, both epistemologically — what is a public institution concerned with unexplained aerospace phenomena?— and from a civic standpoint: what role does a public actor like CNES play in the expertise applied to

what citizens report as being, a priori, inexplicable? There is therefore, as we can see, no valid reason to leave such a question outside the scientific field. Our aim, in questioning the history of GEIPAN and focusing more specifically on the most recent period, was to cool down a hot object, to de-spectacularise research that is worked over by powerful affects. The stake for us is to reconstruct, as historian and sociologist, the social, political, scientific, technical and cultural logics that presided over the founding and continuation of an atypical expertise institution, aiming to answer the questions of citizens who are confronted with phenomena they've deemed strange and for which no explanation has appeared obvious to them. As is standard for a social-science inquiry, we have therefore conducted interviews with the various actors involved, whether GEIPAN managers, investigators, members of the expert committee. We have also examined GEIPAN's public and non-public archives, the investigation reports, the meeting minutes. And we integrated into our analysis a media analysis, whether of the press, radio or television. The articles and broadcasts that have brought GEIPAN's work to light were surveyed, and this vast documentary matrix allows us to reconstruct the fine grain of an institution that has undergone deep shifts in its organisation, but also in its modes of operation. We're not going to detail them here; that will be addressed shortly. Our aim is to use GEIPAN to reflect on the interest granted by the State, through CNES, to the study of UAP. And it seems to us that three structuring factors have emerged, whose relative importance has varied across periods. These three factors are particularly visible in the audit commissioned by CNES in 2001 and produced by François Louange, himself a long-standing member of GEIPAN and a specialist in image analysis. This report is based on 33 interviews conducted with current and former managers of CNES and CNRS, military officials, scientists and science journalists. It is a good starting point for grasping the main lines of the missions attributed to what was called at the time the Rare Aerospace Phenomena Expertise Service — SEPR. It emerges from this thick report that there is a main axis in the investigations that SEPR must conduct, which could be linked to a civic dimension. It's important to respond to the demand from the public and the media, as well as from certain state bodies directly concerned — the national gendarmerie, civil aviation, the air force, civil security — for relevant explanations concerning UAP. The report stresses that "the State must have expertise" — I quote — "and a response capacity in this field whose sovereign character is self-evident." So we see that this civic reasoning aims to take into account the concerns of citizens regarding observations of unidentified aerospace phenomena — concerns which are relayed, probably sustained and amplified by the media, particularly over the past decade. One indicator is the growing media coverage of GEIPAN, which has become a service increasingly known to the general public. We won't dwell here on theories of the contemporary State, but we may simply note that they all broadly tend toward taking the population into account, understood in its political manifestations, including therefore its anxieties. And note that the reflections around the precautionary principle and transparency belong to the same matrix of inquiry that tends to embed public action within a consideration not only of its effects, but also of the collective apprehensions that call for vigilance, questioning or alert. This civic dimension of the study of atmospheric phenomena is a strong claim that all the actors of GEIPAN emphasised in the course of our inquiry. And a pivotal notion allows us to understand how this public regulation of demand has been framed: that of strangeness. Strangeness conceived as a threshold of concern coupled with a need for explanation. And all the protocols for gathering testimonies around which we spoke with the actors involved put strangeness as a sticking point of the investigations. Strangeness makes it possible not to reject requests a priori, and it offers a flexible reception structure for testimonies that are varied in form and heterogeneous in their degree of precision. And this notion of strangeness allows us to grasp how the second axis of investigation of SEPR-GEIPAN was conceived: scientific investigation. François Louange,

in the 2001 report, recalled that the primary justification of SEPRA-GEIPAN consisted in applying the scientific approach — I quote — "the basic approach, when unknown or unusual phenomena are observed in nature, of explaining them rationally, either by reproducing them or, failing that, by repeating and refining the observation with a view to characterisation and possible modelling." And the question is important. It is a matter of developing a method to approach the topic scientifically in order to determine what types of phenomena may correspond to the reported observations. The various actors interviewed are relatively unanimous in our inquiry. It is not relevant to compare GEIPAN to a classical research laboratory producing new knowledge peer-reviewed in a scientific field governed by norms of veridiction and proof involving, for instance, the reproduction of experiments. But we can agree in considering that GEIPAN's work belongs to a mode of rationalisation drawn from the judicial approach. The evidence sought or gathered is of the order of clues. A clue can be very robust and thereby provide a fully relevant explanation. Sometimes, the inference from clues yields only a discourse on the probable, to varying degrees. But in all cases, the expertise produced holds evidence and rational explanation as an intangible horizon of expectation. In the interviews, the actors of GEIPAN all show extreme caution in advancing their conclusions. Above all, the testimony, which very often is the starting point of the investigation, is not taken as anything other than one element among others in the reconstruction of the phenomenon to be explained. It is deeply respected, but not sacralised, because its fragility is known and its malleability proverbial. It is a priori considered worth interest, but its reliability will always be questioned — just as, incidentally, all other elements collected possibly during the investigation. The last axis structuring GEIPAN's mission concerns national defence. This was little present in the 2001 report but has risen in prominence in recent years, as shown by the evolution of journalistic angles in the media treatment of GEIPAN. Whereas the service was rather associated with the paranormal or with space sciences until the 2000s, since then it has been linked to questions of air security and national defence. The ufological revival in the United States over the past decade or so, intrinsically tied to the theme of military secrecy, plays a part. But one may suppose that recent international tensions and new technologies in espionage or drone attack have also pushed governments and general staffs to take an interest in strange aerospace phenomena. It is therefore striking to note the gap between, on the one hand, the fantasies generally associated with UFOs and, on the other hand, the very routine, very pragmatic, rational character of GEIPAN's activity, particularly since the service's overhaul about twenty years ago. To the question "are UFOs a serious subject?", the French State has long answered in its own way, by giving priority to communication with the public, without neglecting military and scientific stakes. Thank you for your attention. I'm just going to reconnect the videoconference link before it drops. Mr Pinsolle, 30 seconds. Politics sometimes requires a lot of agility. We're going to split the first presentation in two, pass the mic to Pierre Lagrange, and then we'll finish the first presentation right after. But I think everyone has the thread in mind. It should stay connected — there we go.

Pierre Lagrange (anthropologist, EHESS)

Thank you very much. Thank you for your invitation. I've been interested in this subject for 40 years, and I want to say that 40 years ago I would never have imagined finding myself here to talk about UFOs. And even today, I have to say that — well, I'm a sociologist, I've studied scientific controversies, like Arnaud, I'm a sociologist of science. For 40 years, and still today, every time I'm asked about UFOs, it's always the same question: Why do some people believe in these things? Bottom line, why do people believe in things that don't exist? And so I'm asked to explain why part of the population has sunk into irrationality. But what

we're seeing today, particularly in this meeting, is that the situation has changed a bit. The problem is no longer posed solely in those terms. But it still often is. I've been particularly interested in how the debate on flying saucers — we called them flying saucers at the time — started in the United States in 1947. It's often presented as the emergence of a popular belief, of an irrationality phenomenon. Let me get closer, that's better. So it's often presented as the emergence of a popular-belief phenomenon and of a belief supposedly linked either to science fiction or to the Cold War. The people who say this haven't read the press articles, because I went to the United States, I dug through the press of the time, and what is quite singular in the emerging debate on flying saucers is that it is not at all a debate opposing believers and non-believers, not at all a debate that reflects the emergence of a popular belief. It's a debate that actually reflects the emergence of belief in the belief of others. You can understand what I mean — that is, in 1947 you don't have people coming out of the woodwork explaining that they've seen flying saucers and that they believe in flying saucers. You have a debate born in the press, questioning why this visionary rumour is taking hold. And as soon as the debate begins, it's linked to two other phenomena. You'll quickly understand why. One of the phenomena brought up is Orson Welles, the panic supposedly triggered by Orson Welles in 1938. So, following on from my interest in flying saucers, for a long time I obviously had to refer to this Orson Welles story, and I investigated the matter. And in fact, when you dig through the press and the events of the time, what you discover is that the famous panic triggered by Orson Welles never took place. It's an invention of the media and the elites the next day. So in fact, by comparing flying saucers to the Orson Welles panic, one participates in stigmatising a part of the public as credulous and irrational. And the other phenomenon brought up during the summer of '47, when flying saucers were being discussed, is the Loch Ness monster. The Loch Ness monster was born in 1933, and roughly speaking the newspapers explain that flying saucers are the aerodynamic version of the Loch Ness monster. But here too, when you go back to 1933 and the press files on the Loch Ness monster, what you find is not that people are starting to believe there is a monster in the Scottish lake, but a kind of craze, a fascination with this credulity that would suddenly afflict the Scots. And you see journalists from London kitting themselves out as colonial hunters, going off to mock the Scots and wondering why these poor Scots are afflicted with hallucinations and see sea serpents in their lake. So in fact, what's very interesting on this subject is that, even today, as soon as the question is raised, it's actually misframed. And the real problem is: how do we frame the question on this subject? Because precisely, we always try to isolate belief, credulity, that part of the public assumed to be irrational. But the real problem is our obsession — literally — with finding irrational credulity. We live in a society built over the past four centuries on its separation from nature, which consisted precisely in constituting ourselves as a society that wanted to distinguish itself from nature and from other peoples, the so-called savage peoples, and within our own society, from the parts of the population considered superstitious — women were hysterical, peasants superstitious, crowds irrational. And so, in fact, flying saucers are one of the by-products of that modernisation effort, which consisted in building our society on the construction of margins, on marginalising some of the other actors. Modernity seemed to come at that price of excluding a portion of others. And so the issue — since I don't do the kind of sociology that is expected of me, but rather my interest is sociology of the sciences — one of my questions has been to try to understand: How can this debate be made to evolve, how can we get out of this systematic casting of others as credulous and irrational, and how can we try to constitute this object as one that could be worthy of study, worthy of attention — a bit like we're trying to do today. And that, in fact, has happened. Above all, throughout the history of UFOs, a whole series of ambiguities have been kept alive. In particular the UFOs' relationship to science. And because very quickly, in fact, in 1947, at the start, journalists went to the military, since

these were supposedly secret weapons. Very quickly, the military reply that no, it corresponds to nothing we can fly in the sky. But above all, the military immediately turn into psychologists, asking what these witnesses are, who claim to have seen things. So immediately the discussion shifts to the psychologisation of the debate. And what is interesting is that journalists will very quickly turn to scientists. They go and find astronomers, they find physicists, to try to identify these things. And here too, the scientists who have absolutely not studied the subject, who have never met a witness at that point, who hear about the phenomenon only through press reports — most of these scientists turn into spontaneous psychologists and sociologists and start discussing, holding forth on popular credulity. So we see that the topic will evolve like this for decades, and we'll have to wait until the US Air Force, from 1947–48 onwards, explicitly asks scientists to study the subject for some engineers and astronomers — notably an astronomer who is now famous, Hynek, who was at the Chicago Observatory and who investigated this subject for the military for about twenty years — for these researchers to be confronted with the facts over long years, so that little by little the situation evolves. So what is quite interesting is that, in fact, this problem, from the outset, has been constantly misframed. It has been constantly referred back to all these questions belonging to the irrational. So today one can ask oneself whether we've really reached a situation where perhaps we can consider posing the problem differently, taking it seriously — or whether we're in a parenthesis, and for what reasons. And here I'd like — if I have a bit of time left? Five minutes, OK. I'd like to mention as well the fact that between when I began to take an interest in these subjects and today, since the debate can be framed in terms of science, it should be noted that science has evolved a great deal. When I started studying this phenomenon, science was broadly at the service of Western civilisation and of Western progress. So it was a science with a rather precise aim. Today more and more scientists consider themselves no longer solely in the service of Western progress, but in the service of the general interest of the living. The debate has shifted. So — can the question of UFOs be part of a way of renewing scientific questions by introducing new actors and transforming a debate whose aim was, broadly, to explain things simply, to colonise nature? That was the principle of science for a very long time. Nature had been constructed as a stock of resources to be exploited, dominated, mastered. And today science has evolved, and under the effect, in particular, of the ecological crisis, scientific debates have been enormously transformed — which allows one to hope that debates on subjects like ours may evolve in step. And here's one last remark: the debate on UFOs evolved, but rather paradoxically, from the 1990s onward. I don't know if many of you here watched the X-Files series, I imagine so. I've been interested in the subject since the early 1980s. And from 1995 onwards, something changed. We shifted from a world where science was in the service of progress, where UFOs were a form of credulity, a debate where, following the X-Files series and the debates around the Roswell affair, the public debate on these subjects was transformed. We shifted from the accusation of irrationality to the accusation of conspiracy theory. So here too, there's a very interesting point. That is, on one side, we saw these subjects gain popularity — whereas before the 1990s, they were completely underground, from 1995 on, they became more and more visible. But they became more and more visible because they were being denounced much more forcefully. Before, they were denounced as irrational. From 1995 on, they were denounced as conspiracy-theory beliefs. And the notion of conspiracy theory began to spread across society. Because when people talked about irrational phenomena in the 1980s, they were niche phenomena. UFOs were something relatively marginal. From 1995 onwards, and the emergence of conspiracy-theory accusations, we saw these debates change, but also society's debates. That is, we entered an era where, in my view, under the effect of several factors — the emergence of the internet, which extended democracy, democratic debate, and the emergence of the ecological question — we had a transformation of relations with the

sciences, but also of relations between elites and societies. And the old elites, who until then had held a monopoly on speech — since the media were accessible to only a few people — found themselves confronted with new media that allowed anyone to speak up. And that, I think, transformed the subject — but it transformed it, you see, in a rather paradoxical way. That is, on one side we saw this subject gain an audience, which is why we are gathered here today. But on the other side, the darker aspect, so to speak, is that we also saw our societies divided in two over these conspiracy accusations that are sweeping across society. So I'm not sure we've won a round — let's say something is happening, but it will depend on how well we're able to seize this subject and turn it into something that goes beyond a mere culture-war between those who consider they have a monopoly on reason and those who consider it irrational and to be set aside in these debates which, I think, concern us all. Thank you. Thank you very much. We're going to finish the first presentation — a bit of cognitive gymnastics — from Dominique Pinsolle, if you can hear me. Thank you very much. In fact, with Jérôme, we drafted our text together, so I prefer to wait to react to any coming questions and leave speaking time to others. Nothing to add? No, I've had my turn. OK. Right, we'll continue with the presentation by Luc Dini, who is scheduled in principle. Pierre? Yes, OK.

Luc Dini (engineer, chair of the SIGMA2 commission, 3AF)

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, Members of the Assembly — thank you for putting together this meeting on UFOs, on UAP. First question: am I a UFO believer? Are UFOs a fantasy? Or is it something else? After spending a number of years in technical activities, and in particular within the Association of Aeronautics and Astronautics of France, which is not a parapsychology consulting firm but a so-called learned society working on aeronautics and space with industrial groups, State bodies including CNES, the Directorate General for Armament, and civil aviation as well, we are dealing, resolutely and clearly, with physical phenomena, physical phenomena that are observed, that are recorded. Of course, around the observation of these phenomena, there may be generation of fantasies, of beliefs — that goes without saying. Next slide. What I'd like to explain to you, in a few words, is what the Sigma 2 committee that I chair at the 3AF is. In fact, this committee was created in 2008 by 3AF, as a continuation of a committee called the Committee for In-depth Studies. The mission entrusted to it was to conduct scientific work on what unidentified aerospace phenomena are. To that end, we've used a kind of compass, shown on this figure, which represents five lines of work. First, documentary research and databases, because talking about UAP for hours is one thing. Looking at what the data are and trying to analyse them is another; that's what makes progress possible. Data from home, of course — and we work closely with GEIPAN and with CNES, I'll come back to that. Through cooperation we can also foster, through reciprocal communication, the sharing of information, particularly with foreign bodies. Once we have this data, what can we do? We can conduct case analyses and really get into the details, try to understand what happened, what was observed, what was recorded. We also conduct physical studies — physical studies on radiation, physical studies on the interaction between unidentified aerospace phenomena and the surrounding environment, for example the atmosphere. And for that, of course, we need means of observation, or need to focus on means of observation. That's the fifth axis. The committee has about thirty people of diverse backgrounds, a very strong defence axis. Today we even have among us several general engineers, rear admirals, fighter pilots, an air brigadier general. So you see, there are military personnel — again, serious people. And we have researchers from the civilian and military spheres, but also psychologists and physicians. He's not here today, but you see, we have a

very diverse group. Next slide. What do we do with these skills? I won't give you a lecture on GEIPAN, because Frédéric Courtade will do so much better than me shortly. Simply, what needs to be understood is how we work in France. The upper part, if you like, is what falls to the official agency, which is GEIPAN. Its mission is, first, to receive a certain number of testimonies and, from there, to conduct investigations, field investigations. Which we don't do at all — the Sigma 2 committee. It's not our calling. From there, reflection will be carried out, in light of the results of the field investigation, by experts — experts of the GEIPAN panel. Some members of the Sigma 2 committee take part in that work and contribute to the classification of those cases. Unidentified cases are the D cases, and then there are well-identified, reliable cases, etc. I won't go into the details of the mechanism, but GEIPAN handles the interface with witnesses, with the gendarmerie, with the air and space force. We, in fact, are in the lower part of the diagram, if you like, where we carry out work on case selection, in-depth analysis to try to see whether, in a final effort, we can explain the phenomena or not. we're able to explain the phenomena or not. And even when we can't explain them, at that point we try to characterise them — that is, to try to pin down the anomaly. To understand better later, perhaps to explain, or on the contrary, to make progress in science and technology. And this is done on French territory, but also in cooperation with others. We've conducted case analyses, for example for Chile. I'll come back to that in a moment. Next slide. So here, in this kind of bestiary, you have cases circled in red. These correspond to the unknown, unexplained phenomena. At the top you have drawings corresponding to sketches made by Air France pilots and co-pilots who were faced a few years ago with a UFO — a UAP — sighting in French skies. Strange, why? Because they're elongated shapes, changing shape, becoming pointed shapes, etc. So one of the characteristics, besides the extraordinary accelerations observed in many cases, is, for example, shape-changing. Obviously, we have specialists working on lightning effects, ball lightning, etc. So we get to have blue squares, if you like — things we manage to identify. Even so, there are objects that escape explanation and raise very interesting questions. What is the physics that governs them? What interaction takes place with the surrounding environment? And are these craft of origin X or Y? Maybe Chinese, maybe Russian — those are the questions the Americans asked themselves — or perhaps coming from elsewhere. But under those conditions, what is the physics that drives them? Next slide. Next. Here I'm going to explain the working method. In this case, you have a kind of summary that I'll try to explain simply, on a case that the Chilean equivalent of GEIPAN submitted to us in January 2017. What is it about? A helicopter, which you can see in the bottom-left corner, a Chilean Navy helicopter, fitted with an infrared camera and a visible-light camera, sees an object. And this object, perceived by the camera — in the middle, you have grey thumbnails with black spots. These black spots are the infrared emissions. The Chileans tell us: "listen, it's simple — we're dealing with an object we don't understand, it's not visible on radar, we have an infrared camera that gives us signal. What is it?" Digging a little, we realised they were saying "invisible on radar" — but we asked them: "do you have the radar data as well as the infrared data?" From there, we were able to work, and we carried out a fairly exhaustive inventory of air traffic around Santiago, Chile. Thanks to our specialists in infrared and radar detection, we were able to cross-reference the information and also produce a thermal model of various aircraft, including an Airbus A340. The bottom line, if you like, is the following sequence. At point number 1 you actually see nothing at all because the plane is viewed roughly from the front, about 80 km away. There's no infrared signal detected by the camera. At point number 2 we have the plane starting to bank. We see it slightly from the side. We have three hot spots. So it all starts to fit. And at point number 3, the plane is moving away, climbing in altitude. In the end, we find it at 9,000 metres of altitude, 180 km away, with a condensation trail. You'll tell me: in the end, there's no mystery here, it's not very interesting.

It is interesting, because it tests the analytical tools and therefore our capacity, in the end, to explain. If our capacity to explain is faced with the unknown, we can say to ourselves at that point that yes, here there is a problem, and we'll go and try to pin down that problem. Next slide. The next case is quite interesting; it took place in 2007 in the Channel Islands. A regional transport aircraft — you can see the cockpit on the right — descends along a north-south route toward the islands, and the captain sees a UFO materialise in his field of view. What's interesting is that he made a sketch, and the chief controller in Jersey observes that there's a radar trace several hundred metres in size. So, if you like, that's rather abnormal. So the question arises: what is it? On the next slide, I won't go into detail because it would take far too long. No, the next one, please. Again, thank you. In fact, we did a painstaking analysis of the radar echoes. So it's like a puzzle, if you like. And in this puzzle, what do we do? Here we have two radars, if you will, pointing. A radar in Jersey with the red line, pointing toward P1, which is Track 1, and a radar corresponding to the blue line, coming from Guernsey. We cross-reference the information, and we observe very significant fluctuations, with very high radar reflectivity levels. I'll conclude very quickly. We haven't found the solution. We're still working on it. We're going to try to bring in new experts to our analyses. But what is certain, if you like, is that there is a correspondence between this kind of very intense radar echo and what was seen by the chief controller at Jersey. What is it? We don't know. So there you have, another method, another investigation, to analyse radar effects, UAP effects. Next slide. I won't go into detail on this one, but Jacques Vallée, well known in ufology and science circles, provided us with some metal samples that we processed a few years ago to try to understand what they were made of. We also had, two years ago, the opportunity to analyse a piece of bark that had been irradiated by a UAP — an event considered unexplained by the US Air Force — and we concluded that this bark had been irradiated by a very high level of energy and power, on the order of 600 MW. That is the power of a nuclear power plant. So that's the kind of work we're doing. Last slide. I'd like to get to our recommendations. First, in France we have a structure that already exists and for which we need more data. You've understood that there are many testimonies, human testimonies. We need more recordings to be able to dig into the subject and better characterise unidentified aerospace phenomena. So, one remark — a recommendation — would be to have links between databases, and in particular with CNES's database, with more technical data. Also, encouragement for pilots and controllers to provide their own testimony. Many don't dare to. Next, conduct in-depth studies, in the framework of GEIPAN's experts, on the basis of these new data fields, physical data, which would allow us to make progress. Physical studies to conduct as well — that's what we try to do at 3AF, Sigma 2, in liaison with engineering schools or universities. It's a matter of working on the substance and thus normalising the subject through research. We also work on observation capabilities. The Lightning Research Laboratory, whose director is a member of the Sigma 2 committee, has also, I would say, agreed to provide us with a certain amount of data so we can test artificial-intelligence techniques and try to pin down strange phenomena. There you go. And so, in summary, this committee is not here to deal with fantasies. It's not here to deal with imaginary things, it's here to deal with physical reality and to try to bring — whether to CNES and GEIPAN in France, or to foreign agencies — some explanations regarding the reality of these phenomena. Thank you.

Q&A after Panel 1

Thanks for keeping strict time. We have a short 15-minute Q&A session that we'll open with Pierre. And then we'll pass the mic. But you'll really have to be very efficient. The format at the Assembly is one minute max. Really, it's terrible. We know. It's a stunting of speech. In your questions, please be brief. That way the answers will be substantive. So — I have

perhaps a first question. In fact, the presentations were both complementary, cumulative, and at the same time not quite in agreement, I feel — particularly on the question of beliefs, etc. And on the reality of the phenomenon, which, from a sociological or anthropological standpoint, isn't necessarily the primary interest. So, from the standpoint of research, I was very intuitively asking myself how we also build a form of interdisciplinarity on these questions, knowing that here we have engineering, physics, astronomy, but also the humanities and social sciences. My first question for the first panellists is: how do we build a space of cumulative, interdisciplinary knowledge that aims to get a little closer, always, to knowledge of these phenomena? First question, which I admit is not entirely obvious. Well, the question, precisely, is what phenomenon we're looking for. Is a "phenomenon" here a recurrent physical phenomenon that is observed and resists so-called conventional explanations, or is a "phenomenon" above all an observation phenomenon, and a social phenomenon, and a political and civic demand? In fact, the UFO question is always between the two. From a sociological standpoint — the history and sociology of science — the reflex you see at GEIPAN is first of all the reflex of data accumulation, of normalising this data, of building a database from which one can work, from which one can eliminate a whole set of cases — it hasn't been said yet, I think, but unexplained cases in GEIPAN's database are very marginal, on the order of 2 or 3%. And then, the objective of this database is to make it available to everyone, in order to possibly conduct more in-depth studies, or even statistics, particularly on unexplained cases. But let's say the first reflex for studying the phenomenon — in scare quotes — is above all the accumulation of data. And on that work, there is an entire methodology now half a century old, put in place gradually, which today allows us to have a fully transparent public database, entirely online, which allows for case studies that can be compared, and from which one can possibly run other statistics. The problem with UFOs is that if you look at the reactions they aroused from the beginning, from 1947 on, I think it's interesting to go a bit further back, because UFOs are actually testimony-based data. Now, the construction of modern sciences, between the 17th century and today, was built precisely on testimony-based data, but by very quickly moving out of that testimony domain, transforming the testimonies of scientists into observations and scientists into instruments, and equipping them with instruments that allowed them precisely to bypass debates on subjectivity. So the problem with UFOs from the start is that it's a phenomenon corresponding to the kind of science being done in the 17th century — what Robert Boyle did. Because Boyle was both instrumental data and also a great deal of data that came from testimony. In the proceedings of the Royal Society journals in the 17th and 18th centuries, you have stories of aerial phenomena, lake phenomena, all sorts of things that come from observation. And precisely, when you look at the evolution and construction of the history of Western sciences, all this data was rapidly excluded. Or else, in the case of zoology or other fields, or of meteorology, the observers, the witnesses, were transformed into instruments. So, in fact, the problem with UFOs is: how do we take data that has, in fact, been excluded from the scientific field in order to reconstruct something that would be a legitimate science — but which, as soon as you step outside the thin networks that ufology has built, you realise doesn't hold up for long. So there's a really important stake here: how do we make this data hold up when, for centuries, the work of science has been to throw it overboard, to say things frankly. So that is the issue. We have something that, until now, has never managed to hold up because it was considered as data that, precisely, did not allow the constitution of facts — what we call facts in science. And just a small aside: when you started your presentation, you said, here we don't do parapsychology. May I kindly remind you that parapsychology has an academic existence much better established than that of ufology? It wasn't a criticism of parapsychology, it was an admission of ignorance. We concern ourselves with UAP and not with parapsychology, but it's a very interesting field. In fact, we have a philosopher on the

Sigma 2 team who is capable of giving us a lecture on Descartes and UFOs. But one could speak of Camille Flammarion and parapsychology, etc. In the end, it's a matter of choosing your topic. That's all. But Descartes was one of those who excluded UFOs, precisely. The Treatise on Meteors is a treatise of the Menzel kind in the 17th century. It's a treatise that excluded the phenomena we can observe as things that would not fall under experimental philosophy. That's the problem. You have to reintegrate all this, at the heart of testimonies and then the physical data on which I've insisted a great deal. Testimony is undoubtedly important, since it's the first element that allowed us to notice the existence of these phenomena. As to knowing what the phenomena are — to have measurable quantities — that's another matter, and it's a difficulty. Now, today, in our work, for example, we have work being done by a psychologist on the impact of close encounters on the psychology of the witnesses. That's one thing. Otherwise, as I explained to you, and I won't repeat it, we try to obtain data, whether of radar, optical or other origin, on the phenomena observed. That said, there's a somewhat intermediate aspect: looking at the interaction between the phenomenon and the environment. So there will be radiation produced. Does it come from the phenomenon itself or from its interaction, for instance, with the atmospheric medium? And you can have exactly the same thing on human beings. That is, you can note a close encounter and this encounter will carry markers that will remain, so to speak, imprinted in the human body, and produce radiation, etc., which can also give indications about the source, so to speak, of the phenomenon. But all this is quite considerable and slow work. Jérôme may have picked up on that. We shared the work with Dominique, he's the one who's answering. Ah yes, of course. He's answered, so that's perfect. Thank you. Pierre, do you have a question? We have room for maybe two very brief questions — you've understood the rule. We have mics that will circulate. And we alternate — men-women, women-men. You've clearly seen that... Yeah, three minutes. Alexandre Sheldon Dupley, I'm on leave from the Defence Historical Service. I speak in my personal capacity. A question for you, gentlemen parliamentarians. I'd like to know why in your introduction you didn't cite your American colleagues who spoke this week and the week before. The terms of their presentation of the subject are of such a stark contrast with what you said that they deserve to be noted. We have the Florida Representative, Luna, who asked the White House to protect whistleblowers who can lead whoever wants to the locations of recovered vessels and the biological remains of non-human beings. And I'm quoting the Florida Representative, Paola Luna. We'll come back to those questions specifically in the third round table. And we don't have an answer to everything. You've understood that the goal of this colloquium is also to shift the focus to France as well. There is a lot of news, indeed, in the United States. But I think that also overlays the understanding of the topic from the old continent, and it's a bet we've made, which is no doubt debatable, but at any rate we're starting the debate. Hello, so, Rosaline Dalméda, I'm a geomatician. I have a question precisely on the integration of issues linked to social psychology, and possibly to psychology in general, because in cases, for example — I don't know — of testimony, or even possibly of encounters, in any case, there is always a human aspect to this kind of question. So the question is whether there is significant involvement — of sociologists, psychologists or others — who can directly link observations that are entirely physical and material with human perceptions and all the biases, and also, how to put it, cultural and general aspects that come with that. There. Pierre, would you like to answer in a minute and a half maximum? I'm not sure I have — there are psychologists today working on what are called extraordinary experiences, ranging from parapsychology to ufology, covering a wide spectrum of experiences, who gather these facts, analyse them without a reductionist stance as was done for a long time. So I think it would be worth reaching out to those kinds of people. There is work that has existed for many years. I'm not an expert on these subjects. I just wanted to note their existence. We'll move on to the second

round table. Thank you for this first round. It was a good way to enter the subject. So I call Frédéric Courtade, Mathieu Courtaban, Jérémy Moyal, Michaël Vaillant and Gilles Munsch, please. Well, after starting to open cracks and reflecting on how to construct this range of objects, of phenomena, from the angle of the humanities and also of what Sigma 2 committee produces, with methods, etc., we continue with the round table on official work on UAP by GEIPAN and the Air and Space Force. We're going to continue spelling out the how. It's important to know how one works on these questions. We begin with Frédéric Courtade, director of GEIPAN, whom I warmly thank for coming here despite the train problems, etc.

Frédéric Courtade (head, GEIPAN)

I thank you in return for organising this afternoon. I've been running GEIPAN for two and a half years. So GEPAN, the ancestor of GEIPAN, was created — one might even say invented — almost 50 years ago. It was an era much marked by UFO observations, sometimes even waves of UFO observations, which fascinated as much as they could worry a whole segment of the population. And so in the mid-1970s, the Minister of the Armed Forces, Robert Galley, in the course of an interview, dwelled on this state of affairs, insisting on the poorly known character of these phenomena or objects observed in the sky, which could not remain that way given that they could, at minimum, cause concerns or risks for air traffic — a sector in full development at the time. It was also a matter of studying these phenomena, dubbed UAP, in a rational way, with the input of science, because most of the analyses done at the time — at least those that made it into the media — leaned more or less reasonably toward the sensational, ultimately bringing more questions than answers. The president of CNES in office during that period went along with this approach, providing scientific backing that legitimised, in a sense, a body dedicated to studying these phenomena. Then Hubert Curien, who succeeded him at the head of CNES, attached GEPAN to his organisation chart in 1977. Claude Poher, GEPAN's first director, was tasked with organising its new activities for the CNES house. He was given staff and means to operate, with care that what came out of the study of these phenomena be scientifically grounded, with a scientific board appointed directly by the president of CNES, tasked with validating this work. The validation of these studies had above all not to damage the scientific image of CNES, which had been pioneering the space sciences since 1962. So GEPAN quickly received media attention. It was assigned research missions on UFOs, on the extraterrestrial hypothesis, and it went through an expansion phase until 1988, when it was then replaced by SEPRA — the Service for the Study of Atmospheric Re-entry Phenomena. Then, from 2000 onwards, atmospheric re-entries were removed from its remit, The service was rebuilt at that point as the Rare Aerospace Phenomena Expertise Service, whose mission was to refocus on the collection of information about observations and the building of databases and testimony archives. So in 2001 there was the audit we mentioned earlier, which was commissioned by CNES management, and CNES management then decided to reorganise SEPRA by creating GEIPAN, the current GEIPAN, with the "I" added to the original acronym — the "I" of "information." The audit's recommendations serve as the foundation for the organisation and operation of today's GEIPAN, since its missions are now structured around the informing of UAP, information and transparency of activities toward the informing of UAP, information and transparency of activities toward the informing of UAP, information and transparency of activities toward the general public — these are the obligations in the processes. It was really a matter of parrying all the criticism about a lack of transparency that had precisely been attributed to CNES, and thus to the State, on the UFO issue. In the first manifestation of these two ambitions of information, there is when the vast work of sorting and digitising the archives was undertaken by Jacques Patenet, the first director of GEIPAN, who, thanks to a

methodological overhaul, managed to present as early as 2009 roughly 30% of the files stored in GEIPAN's cellars, via a website that was created for the occasion. The group was authorised to open its public archives — an unprecedented initiative that marks a major advance in transparency and accessibility of data on these phenomena. An innovative decision that quickly drew the attention of media around the world. So we're perhaps certain about all these questions. So collection, analysis, investigation, and information through the publication of the strange observation cases investigated make up the mission of the contemporary GEIPAN. Within CNES, it enjoys very, very strong autonomy to address the general public directly, since it is first at the service of the public, while respecting the ethics required by the CNES house, of course, and the General Data Protection Regulation regarding personal data of all witnesses and external collaborators of GEIPAN-CNES. So collection is first the gathering of testimonies, the preferred source is GEIPAN's website. Move to the next slide. There we go. So this is... testimony, in fact. On the GEIPAN website, if you click on "Testify," you already have a small guide to help you understand what you saw. Then if you wish to file a testimony, you can do so by filling in a questionnaire — a questionnaire built in close collaboration with humanities professionals, social scientists and scientific psychologists, to collect the technical aspects that make an investigation possible, but also the emotion aroused by the observation and the witness's sensitivity toward these phenomena. Other sources of collection are the gendarmerie's official reports, since provisions have been made with the National Gendarmerie so that testimony can be taken in such a way that it can be usable. The gendarmerie is a historical partner of GEPAN and GEIPAN, and even in the pre-GEPAN era. We also receive forms and declarations from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, which allows aviation professionals to report freely an observation they may have found strange. After collection and testimony comes the analysis with other CNES services, of course, first of all like the Space Operations and Surveillance Centre, which watches over satellites France is a stakeholder in. Consulting this body allows us to establish a space situation at the time of the observation. There are also other operators and State services with which CNES-GEIPAN has concluded partnerships and protocols specifying the terms of their involvement in the analysis of cases. We emphasise the importance of collaboration with the National Gendarmerie, both for testimony and for its very local presence, which allows us, upon simple consultation, to obtain information on the environment at the time of the observation. And the gendarmerie can also take part in investigations. The Air and Space Force, which makes available the radar traces of its surveillance and air-policing network, allowing us to settle without ambiguity the aeronautical situation at the time of the observation. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation, for its network of material and human surveillance near airports. Météo France, for providing meteorological data and modelling data that are used by forecasters, and also its expertise on any exceptional weather event. All this is very useful for our investigations. The body of astronomers at CNRS, for their expertise on celestial configurations or other events, which allow us to account for a remarkable astronomical situation. Also some laboratories of excellence. We mentioned earlier the CNRS Lightning Laboratory, the National Museum of Natural History, and its FRIPON sky-watch structure for natural atmospheric re-entries, the Institute of Celestial Mechanics and Ephemeris Computation of the time-space laboratory. The materials and traces expertise services also at CNES Toulouse and sometimes others provide, on request, support to investigations. In addition to these partners which provide technical elements to develop hypotheses and compare UAP with known phenomena, GEIPAN also relies on scientists who help settle the consistency of testimonies — so, experts in scientific and cognitive psychology, who give investigators techniques to help the witness verbalise their memories, and also analyse, in the interviews conducted with witnesses, what stems from actual observation or from a statement that seems rather linked to a memory

reconstructed by the emotion experienced or the delay in giving testimony. After analysis comes the investigation, aiming to classify cases. This is GEIPAN's engine. The work is carried out internally at CNES, with a CNES investigator, and by investigators who are mostly volunteers. The volunteers are enrolled in an investigator pool following a spontaneous application, an interview to determine their motivation and sensitivity toward UAP, plus the completion of an investigation exercise with a respectability check as well. The investigators are distributed geographically across the whole territory; they take part in the evaluation of observation cases, they are mandated for very precise missions — remote or field investigation. They must respect the investigation method laid out in the GEIPAN investigator's guide. Investigation files are then validated and finalised by the staff and published on the website. The investigator pool is currently made up of 16 volunteer investigators, a very large majority of them very experienced. They are trained, prepared, responsive, trustworthy and available enough to travel about 200 km from home to meet witnesses when needed. And 80 to 100 investigations are commissioned each year. Their duration depends on complexity, which is often discovered as it goes along. A multidisciplinary expert committee that we mentioned earlier — four members of this expert committee will speak today. It is constituted by GEIPAN. It is made up of around 18 experts who also act mostly on a voluntary basis. They have other jobs, but they help us with our issues. Their role is to examine the most complex observation cases submitted to them, fully independent of the investigation work. They take part in the debate emerging from investigations. They can argue for a reorientation of the investigation. And their opinion is systematically requested if a case is heading toward a classification of D — a UAP D — that is, phenomena unidentified after investigation. Although consultative, this opinion allows GEIPAN, and me myself, to decide either by consensus or by vote on the final classification. The experts have varied professions, linked to aerospace but not only. Currently we have pilots, experts in propulsion, aircraft, drones, parachuting, lightning, plasma, image processing, detection, astronomy, astrophysics, meteorology, ornithology, anthropology, sociology, biology, ufology, scientific psychology and clinical psychology. These experts are consulted case by case when the expertise is beneficial to an investigation, but the committee or panel meets at least twice a year at minimum to rule on the classification of observed phenomena and to exchange information on GEIPAN's activity. Publication, for information: GEIPAN publishes its investigation work transparently, and this is understood with witnesses as soon as their observation goes into investigation, since we ask them a priori to transfer the copyright of the questionnaire, of any photo or video recordings, of any material they wish to entrust to us, linked to their observation, with a view to possible publication after the investigation has taken place — and that can be several months after the date of their testimony. Without this authorisation, the case will clearly not be taken up by GEIPAN — it will not be investigated, thank you. So it will not be investigated. All this obliges us, this deal, to respect and protect the anonymity of everyone who collaborates with the investigation — during the investigation with strict compartmentalisation of the personal data entered on the questionnaires or in declarations made afterwards, with named tasking of experts and investigators. And just before publication, the investigation file passes through the filter of the GEIPAN documentation officer, to remove any element allowing anyone to be recognised, who might not want to be bothered for having dared to file with GEIPAN. So the service of course also has the ambition of promoting, as much as possible, the advancement of scientific knowledge associated with UAP, striving to properly delineate what escapes understanding and current knowledge, identifying the questions to be put to science, given all the diversity of research topics pursued at CNES and all its links with the scientific community. In this respect, but also to share expertise, a dedicated workshop, called CAIPAN, is organised roughly every five years to gather the community on invitation. So an

openness stance — and all the work is of course reported back to a steering committee. GEIPAN's steering committee is called COPEPAN, succeeding the scientific committee from the outset, from the very beginning. This governance body of GEIPAN is consultative. It is made up of representatives of all our partners and of the CNES management, and it is tasked with ensuring proper respect of the missions assigned to us. Thank you. Thank you. On time as well. Perfect. Without further delay, I hand the floor to Mathieu Courtaban, deputy director of CAPCODA, and Jérémy Moyal of the Air and Space Force, who will present their work.

Mathieu Courtaban (deputy director, CAPCODA, French Air and Space Force)

Members of the Assembly, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon to all. Thank you for inviting us to this colloquium, at which I have the pleasure of having the responsibility of representing the Air Force, especially in the face of your questions, which I imagine will be numerous. I'll start by briefly introducing the unit in which I work with Captain Moyal, here present, at CAPCODA. I'll spare you the precise meaning of the CAPCODA acronym; I'll just briefly introduce the mission we carry out. CAPCODA's purpose is to merge all detections from radars — both civilian and military — present on national territory. It covers mostly metropolitan France, and from these detections, to build a recognised, intelligible air picture, in order to then monitor all mobile objects flying over French skies and possibly intervene in case of doubt about the level of threat that any given mobile might represent. From these detections, the first step is to classify, knowing that 95 to 98% of the mobiles detected are almost automatically classified by their nature or by the various explicit ways a mobile can identify itself, that is: radio, flight plans, transponder codes, etc. We nevertheless have a few percent left that present a small level of doubt or unknown for our unit. They are classified by threat level and will, where appropriate, trigger interventions, either by our air traffic controllers or by our fighter or helicopter assets, to verify the nature of these objects. Most of the interventions triggered are in fact by fighter assets, which let us scramble quickly and reach almost any point in France within a few minutes. That's why we use fighters for this mission. Where appropriate, when we notice infractions or the nature of a mobile that may worry us even after identification, the matter is referred to the competent authorities — particularly judicial ones, if it involves infractions by recreational aircraft, for instance. All of this to say that our contribution to the whole theme of the UAP phenomenon is ultimately of two kinds. We may potentially initiate and possibly respond to certain UAP cases. And then our second approach is really support to GEIPAN, as Mr Courtade explained. As for the initialisation of cases, we can imagine two scenarios. We can imagine testimonies from our own crews, who represent only a few percent of the aerial activity taking place over national territory. And to my mind, we're at less than one occurrence per year of testimony from Air Force crews. One quite recently, but which was explained by a light phenomenon between two military aircraft, as it happens. That said, on all cases of unidentified detection that may have technical or physical characteristics catching our attention, as I mentioned in the introduction, we will fairly rapidly scramble our fighter assets and go, visually, with qualified and sworn crews, to witness what they encounter. It turns out that the modernisation of our radar fleet, particularly military, allows us to detect mobiles that are increasingly small and with increasingly low residual speeds. This significantly increases the number of interventions by our combat aircraft which, most of the time, will identify objects that turn out to be no threat at all — that is, regularly flocks of migratory birds that we catch at very high altitude, or all sorts of balloons, some of which, to spare you the suspense, have Mickey or Minnie Mouse shapes in the east of Paris. So some cases, from our perspective, are quickly

classified by this kind of intervention. Yes, it can raise a smile to send a combat aircraft to identify Mickey and Minnie. That said, as I explained earlier, for us, unknown equals doubt equals potential threat — hence the interest in being permanently ready to pre-act, even on this kind of call. As I said, our second contribution to the UAP phenomenon is the supply of radar-trace elements upon request from GEIPAN. And this is something we do on a fairly regular basis. I'd say it's between 12 and 15 cases a year, perhaps a bit more. These are fairly routine procedures for us, because there are all sorts of bodies that ask us for these radar restitutions. And we transmit them in a completely transparent way, without any possibility of filtering out any element. And the case that Captain Moyal will present shortly serves as the best possible illustration. To provide these radar traces, we simply call on our technicians who retrieve the data that the civilian and/or military radars compile in a fused manner, and then we do a small spatiotemporal extraction with all the elements of appraisal that may be known to our services — that is, altitudes, speeds, times of detection, and all the means of identification I mentioned earlier: radio contacts, possibly flight plans, or associated transponder codes. In any case, everything that lets us dispel doubt about the initial nature of these contacts. Knowing that in addition to our civilian and military radars, which are meant primarily to detect airborne mobiles — really general aviation or recreational aviation — we also have within the Air Force, operated by the Space Command, a rather satellite-oriented surveillance radar, which allows us to see objects in the highest layers of the atmosphere. Note that this surveillance radar does not, of course, cover the whole globe, because a good part of space is behind us, behind the Earth, in another location. But this surveillance radar is above all technically developed to direct tracking radars onto atmospheric re-entries or onto fairly precise orbits. So it does not necessarily allow us to visualise all the objects that could have been within its acquisition field. What I'd also like to tell you is that insofar as all these sensors are deployed mostly over metropolitan territory, we are a bit more delicate in terms of detection over certain overseas territories. You have to imagine that on the metropolitan territory, we have almost total control of everything flying there. And, to my knowledge at least, since my years at CAPCODA, we're not aware of facts we would really have completely failed to identify — particularly facts featuring kinematic characteristics or direction changes that are, a priori, inexplicable. Most of the facts on which we still have some small doubts are more very low speeds at high altitude, which are often exactly the speeds of the wind at those altitudes, and are probably debris from balloons — whether weather balloons, balloons released from the ground, or flocks of birds that we couldn't identify because possibly weather didn't allow us to send a combat aircraft to check. I'll now hand over to Captain Moyal to explain one of the cases we helped GEIPAN gladly resolve — with good probability, if I understand correctly — last spring. And I'll gladly answer your questions. Thank you, Michael.

Jérémy Moyal (captain, CAPCODA, French Air and Space Force)

Members of the Assembly, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon, I'm Captain Moyal of CAPCODA. I renew our thanks for the invitation to this colloquium. I'd like to briefly present a case we resolved, that GEIPAN resolved thanks to our data last spring. It was a testimony in southern Brittany from a couple and their female neighbours who observed at night three orange lights with a linear movement. With ocular and auditory testimony, because it was accompanied by a great humming, detected by these people. And so almost immediately GEIPAN contacted us for a radar restitution. As my colleague Courtaban and Mr Courtade said, our radars allow us almost unambiguously — our radar mesh, since we have them all

over France — to provide a sound, known air picture of the situation at the moment. And thanks to this radar restitution, we managed to identify six mobiles that could correspond to these testimonies from the trio of people, in an Air and Space Force exercise called POGR, which simulates an air raid. So through physical explanation, through parallax phenomenon, light phenomenon, phenomenon of light reflection, we were able to show that it wasn't one light or a triangular object, but three aircraft in patrol flying in triangle formation, which corresponded, at least, to those people's testimonies. Reading the methodology and investigative work of GEIPAN investigators, the case was classified A — that is, phenomenon explained. This is one example of how the Air and Space Force, and therefore CAPCODA and its network of controllers and radar technicians, manage to shed light on cases such as those presented earlier. I've finished, and I'm ready to answer your questions if you have any. We'll ask the questions later, but in any case, thank you for this well-sourced state of affairs, lieutenant colonel and captain.

Gilles Munsch (UAP case investigator, GEIPAN)

I now hand over to Gilles Munsch for an explanation of these investigation methods at GEIPAN. How do you concretely work to study these cases? Yes, thank you for the invitation and for giving me the floor to talk about the work of investigators — fairly discreet work in the shadows. So, before getting into the substance, it seems to me there's a fundamental question to be raised: why investigate? We can discuss and debate that, but I refer you to later questions if needed. Well, at the start of an investigation we have data coming from the witness or witnesses — often the case. This data we'll call initial data. It is of two kinds. First, essentially testimony data, which is in the majority and depends of course on the witnesses' five senses, particularly sight and hearing, but not only. It also depends on their mental faculties, particularly memory. It depends on their culture, their training. On their convictions, or even in some cases their beliefs. So one can well imagine that behind all this testimonial data there is a certain fragility, a certain subjectivity, which one must know how to weigh, because one can have very good witnesses, and witnesses more subjective than others. Beyond this testimonial data, we may have instrumental data, possibly — not always, but they are less frequent — when the witness can provide us with photos, videos, or when we know there are technical recordings elsewhere, from instruments. This data can't be accused of subjectivity, but we know all technologies have their performance limits, and we know many of these technologies are prone to artefacts. We know well the visual artefacts we can encounter on photos or videos, and we'll have to know how to analyse, understand and highlight them when they exist, of course. So this starting data is provided by the witness, and to this data, the investigator will be tasked with seeking data I would call contextual — additional data to understand the whole environment, the whole context of the observation — because the witness, will not necessarily provide that data. It's not their concern: their concern is the observation. So the aim of the inquiry will be twofold. First, to collect as much data as possible on the phenomenon itself, obviously, and on the witness or witnesses too, at various levels. Also on the environment in the broad sense — all this complementary contextual data, and possibly also on the instruments and all the documents provided, to try to examine them in detail. From there, we conduct an investigation. I'll skip the assignment stage — how an investigation is assigned to an investigator, how it is made official vis-à-vis witness and investigator — because that's detail, and I'll move on to more important matters. So, as soon as the investigator is assigned to a case — that is, once the case has passed the preliminary stages to be entered in the database, and once the pre-characterisation stage has not brought to light a plausible explanation — an investigation must be launched. So the investigation begins remotely, and the work will be carried out in parallel, seeking

information — contextual information — on various fronts. Notably, for instance, as we've seen, the aerial domain — I won't come back to it since it's been well explained — the whole aeronautical part, because there is a lot of stuff flying in our sky. We'll have meteorological data, because it's important; it's important to know the meteorological context, particularly for all confusions with balloons, aerostats. The wind is important for making a link between the two. It can be the media environment, because talk of the case may occur elsewhere, beyond the testimony to GEIPAN — the case may be talked about elsewhere in the media, on social networks, everywhere. So we'll have to monitor, look everywhere in those areas. We'll look at the context... I'm getting lost in my notes... Yes, the environment in the broad sense, we've seen. There's also everything aerological, that is, sounding balloons, experimental balloons, airships, gas balloons and hot-air balloons, etc. We'll move on to others. We'll look at the industrial environment. There may be industries that have done things that could present exceptional and uncommon particularities. We also have the military environment, so military exercises — we had a fine example — and witnesses are not used to that; they are surprised by that kind of thing, etc. So the whole environment will be swept by the investigator — parallel research, because we advance in each area in parallel, to try to extract as much data as possible. After this data, it will need to be analysed and interpreted in terms of rational explanations, since the initial goal is to find a rational explanation of the phenomenon. We may or may not succeed. Failing that, if we can't characterise a rational explanation, we try to estimate a residual strangeness. There's a strangeness that remains, and we have to try to handle it. So these elements of residual strangeness we try to compare as much as possible with known phenomena, and very often this comparison lets us reduce the residual strangeness — and then we'll see how we can evaluate and classify the case. So once we've done that, if the remote investigation has yielded a solution, we move to the investigation report and the whole subsequent process. If we haven't been able to conclude with the remote investigation — which happens for a percentage of cases — we try to complete the data by going on site: a remote investigation, a field investigation instead, which we have to reinitialise through a whole formalised step, etc. And the investigator can leave, travel to meet the witnesses and the locations where it happened — the context, really, on site. So there, the investigator will go. Insofar as possible, they will be able to conduct a much fuller interview than the simple starting questionnaire, which is always ambiguous. So the witness will be able to express themselves more. If the context is suitable, we try to develop the interview in the form of a cognitive interview. It's a technique used at GEIPAN, originating in the military and judicial field. It's a technique that provides a double advantage: it improves the witness's ability to recover their memories, and therefore to render their experience more fully, and, in addition, it reduces the risk of disturbing or influencing the witness — of the investigator influencing the witness. Because in the interview, one must increase the data one can receive, but avoid disturbing the witness with subjective influences. So this is a training we have to prepare us, to improve us during these interviews — to question well and to conduct the interview well. Once we've done these interviews, we can do reconstructions on the site, we can take various measurements, we can undertake steps — since we're on site — local steps, at the gendarmerie, town hall, various industrial and other institutions, to collect as much information as possible relative to the hunches and ideas we've had through the remote investigation. Once all that is finished, we return home, and we now have to give an account of all this — draft an investigation report, so there's a whole way of presenting the case, all the classic things, arriving with technical appendices if needed. The difficult part afterwards is being able to assess the case, so the investigator will be tasked with issuing a number of hypotheses in light of all their reflection. There are a number of hypotheses they'll try to evaluate on various criteria. They have two parameters to establish. On one side, the consistency of the case — a combination of the quantity of information

collected and its reliability. I'll skip the technical detail of how to do all this. It's too complicated, too long to set out here. Then, they can issue an opinion on the consistency of the case, which will be one of the two parameters for classification. Then they'll have to estimate the case's residual strangeness, which we mentioned. If we're at this stage, with no answer and residual strangeness, we'll have to try to evaluate it in relation to the hypotheses that can be put forward to see if they fit and account for this strangeness and cancel or reduce it. So there's a whole series of parameters for each hypothesis, parameters the investigator establishes. And then, on both sides of the argument, they'll have to evaluate each hypothesis. It's a work of reflection, and then the investigator will rank these hypotheses in terms of residual strangeness. One hypothesis will generally stand out more than the others, and from there, the investigator will make a proposal for classification, explained in the report. They'll draft a conclusion of the report, and once the whole file is finalised, they transmit it to GEIPAN — the GEIPAN team will re-read it and validate it or not. Either they validate and accept the classification proposal put forward by the investigator, or they find things to amend, correct or complete. They can at that point call on certain experts, or even convene, for the hardest cases, the expert committee for an additional opinion. At that point, the experts will give individually a reasoned opinion on how they see the case. And then, the GEIPAN team will synthesise all this and will propose a definitive classification with a certain strangeness and consistency. This will give you the chart you certainly all know from the GEIPAN site, if you've read the investigation files. The strangeness on the vertical axis, the consistency on the horizontal axis. It always ends with a chart with a point giving the situation on the abscissa — strangeness on the y-axis, consistency — which will place the point in an A, B, C or D box. And that is how we manage to give what we hope is a relevant opinion on the case. We'll see later what more we can add to that. So, once all this is done... next slide. Training. How the investigators — these volunteer investigators from all walks of life, some with ufological experience, some with none at all — have to adapt to GEIPAN's procedure, methodology and rules. So, for that, training is necessary. As a training format, we have an annual 2–3 day workshop taking place in Toulouse, where we do a whole set of exercises, courses, presentations, meetings with experts, technical visits, etc. I'll skip over all that. It's very enriching. It also allows the investigators to meet in person, because we're often in contact by email or video. We do tutoring — the more experienced investigators write tutorials to solve certain points. It can be very technical, on all sorts of possible topics we encounter during an investigation. So new investigators can self-train from these tutorials. There's also live tutoring — a video call between two people, a beginner investigator with a more seasoned one, we can have a session to train, get information or troubleshoot the use of a piece of software, some tool, a search for weather information, etc. So all the information at our disposal is gathered in a documentary space, a wiki accessible on the GEIPAN site, where we currently find all the information accumulated over 20 years. We also have participatory investigations. If an investigator has difficulties on an investigation, they can request help from their peers, so to speak, plus the GEIPAN team, and we do a video call to discuss for an hour or two their case, to try to find new leads, help them, or suggest certain things that might unblock them in their investigation. And that also allows other investigators, through these discussions, to train without seeming to and to increase their experience and knowledge of other cases they haven't investigated themselves. And then, for the most interesting investigations, we can even draft feedback sheets to share particular findings — particularities that may have appeared in certain investigations more remarkable than others. Next slide. Here I'll go very quickly, because I think I've gone over my time. So, on the ethics side, since the investigators do this as a voluntary, unpaid initiative to help GEIPAN, they must have rules of ethics vis-à-vis witnesses first — respect for the witness, their integrity, no intrusion into private life or into the medical field, for example. Respect

vis-à-vis GEIPAN for the procedures and rules of conduct that are laid down by GEIPAN, respect deadlines where possible despite the vagaries of investigations, and respect the other investigators simply by collaborating as much as possible with the others. Next slide — this will be the conclusion. So my conclusion on the next slide is that the investigation is an exercise that is difficult, delicate, demanding and sometimes very time-consuming. We don't necessarily imagine how much time it demands... and some investigators are in professional activity. So they do this in their free time. It's collaborative work, that's very important, I think, that this work be collaborative. The system has been operating for quite a few years now, since about 2010, the investigators. And so we try to accumulate experience and take advantage of it, and to evolve things — so improve the system. A case file — this is very important to say — an investigation file, even once classified, remains open. That is, we can come back to it if we have new information. This has happened regularly. Sometimes we had an explanation, and we realise the explanation isn't correct because there is new data, and we correct it — or the reverse: we classified something as D because we hadn't found a solution, and later we get new information — sometimes it's a stroke of luck — new data, and tools that have evolved and allow us to resolve the case, and only the case moves from D to perhaps A or B, depending on the degree of certainty we can obtain. A short comment as well: many cases escape GEIPAN, because witnesses turn to GEIPAN, but also to private groups, let's say, and increasingly to the media, newspapers, radio, television, and to MPs now, more and more. Well, social media for many. So some cases escape GEIPAN. Some cases may be important. So GEIPAN shares its data via its site. It's just anonymised, but we've seen the transparency, even from CAPCODA, of all the data. The approach is transparent. So we share the data. Private groups that do serious work can perfectly well share their investigations with GEIPAN, with the small caveat that these investigations be interesting to us. The approach used must be close enough to ours that we understand each other. There you go. So I'm finished. Your questions will be welcome. And I thank you for your attention and apologise for having gone over my time. You've only gone over by one minute, so all is well. Thank you, that was very precise. I now hand over to Michaël Vaillant, of UAP Check, whom I had met a few years ago in Toulouse — I remember. For a presentation, still in 15 minutes, but I know you'll keep to the time. Then afterwards we'll have a Q&A moment, as earlier, before a short break. Ah, OK. Can you hear me? Very good.

Michaël Vaillant (UAP Check)

OK. Well, Members of the Assembly, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you really from the bottom of my heart for giving us the chance to come and speak here and for organising this colloquium. For many years, I worked at GEIPAN in Toulouse without myself being a CNES employee. Then I worked with UAP Check, an association connected with organisations around the world. This position placed me at the junction of several worlds — that of witnesses, investigators, databases, digital tools and experts, but also with the research world, having myself contributed to the scientific production of various papers with various laboratories. Thematic laboratories of the CNRS, particularly in geology, aeronautics and mathematics. And what this experience has taught me is that the boundary between investigation and science is fragile. So today I'm going to talk to you about interface issues, in fact. Next slide. An unexplained phenomenon does not automatically become an object of research. It may be reported but poorly documented. Documented but poorly transmitted. Transmitted but not exploited. Archived but never studied, sensitive and disappearing behind legitimate security constraints. The problem is not only knowing what UAP are. The problem is knowing whether we are capable of turning an observation into data, into usable data, and then into research objects. At bottom, without a shared definition and without a traceable

procedure, we accumulate accounts, files, archives, we string together testimonies, but we're not yet doing science. And today, the question now is: are our institutions organised to preserve, transmit, study and value phenomena that man, ultimately, can neither categorise nor explain? And this will be the meaning of five pieces of feedback I would like to share with you today. Next slide, please. My first feedback is simple. Testimony is indispensable, as we've seen, but not sufficient. The witness is often the first sensor of an unusual phenomenon. But a human testimony, we all know, is fragile. There are problems of memory, context, surprise, stress, ability to describe, willingness to speak. So we develop methods and try to ensure the witness is at ease, isn't afraid of being judged, etc. And we also know, as Gilles recalled, that GEIPAN only sees the tip of the iceberg. There are witnesses who don't know there is a body in France today, and then there are witnesses who don't want to testify either. They don't trust the state or the body. So they turn to associations, or don't testify at all. Despite all that, the testimonies we collect are precious for the humanities and social sciences, but today I'd say GEIPAN essentially feeds the latter — psychology, sociology — less so the hard sciences. Hard cases, as Luc Dini said, are rare. Sometimes we have to widen the spectrum, look beyond France to find cases. And we also need calibrated data. We need data recorded with cameras, sensors, stations. So possibly technical sites. All that requires resources. Resources which, for the moment, we don't have directly. In France we nevertheless have a detection network called FRIPON, which detects fireballs and meteorites. What few people know is that this network stems particularly from discussions within GEPAN and around multidisciplinary needs. At the time, it associated GEIPAN with discussions with the National Museum of Natural History, the CEA, and IMCCE, of course. And then CNRS laboratories joined in, and the project was born. This precedent shows that a need arising from UAP can produce a scientific infrastructure useful well beyond UAP. It also shows that we could rely on this kind of network, at low cost, to also investigate UAP. This model shows that active observation of the sky can ultimately serve us — and it can serve us, since UAP ultimately rest on a form of interdisciplinary science, a science that does not yet formally exist but that we hope will emerge one day. It can serve other fields — meteorology, of course; it can serve bird observation, etc. So I think we'll have to go toward this, one day — toward sensor networks in France as well, as we see emerging everywhere around the world. I don't think we should be behind here on what's happening elsewhere. Next slide, please. The 2001 SEPRA audit — which we mentioned earlier — opened up an ambitious perspective: characterising phenomena, producing statistics, identifying classes of phenomena, possibly modelling them. In reality, 25 years later, GEIPAN's activity has above all refocused on an indispensable mission: receiving observations from the public, analysing, classifying, publishing them and responding to witnesses. That is precious, but I'd say it's not yet quite enough to bring into being a science of UAP. In fact, there is a fairly deep misunderstanding. Many believe that CNES, through GEIPAN, is meant to do research. In reality, CNES's role is first of all to provide tools, means, mechanisms to allow research to work. One might compare GEIPAN to a satellite. It collects, filters, sorts, extracts signal from background noise, and makes the data usable. But once the database exists, who takes it up scientifically? You have unexplained phenomena for which we don't know which science to turn to. We don't know whether, we can turn to psychologists, sociologists, physicists, aeronautics specialists. In these cases of the unexplained, in the end, there can be everything. And no field, today, in science, can alone take on the entire problem. By definition, a UAP D is not yet directed toward any discipline. And that is the meaning of the diagram behind me, the one with a double loop. Today, we have a complete investigation loop organised by GEIPAN. And we have, I'd say, a half-loop that is a science loop, partly organised through the network of experts around GEIPAN, but which doesn't fully close. In fact, in the investigation, investigators have a horizontal knowledge. They must know a little of

everything about many things and treat cases in a very homogeneous way, both for and against, as Gilles said. But on the other side, scientists have a very vertical knowledge. They go deep into a signal, each in their own field. They look at a bias, a sensor, a hypothesis, a class of phenomena. And these are two very different populations, that one cannot conflate, I'd say, because they have different objectives today. And the experts are currently mobilised at GEIPAN's request. To my mind, what they still lack is scientific autonomy. It's a group of experts capable of setting priorities, directing links, indicating which data is missing and which protocols must evolve. Of course, some experts intervene individually, but we do not yet have a form of scientific committee, and perhaps beyond that a scientific foundation, to make autonomous the decisions of this form of science, this new science. And so what I suggest here is to close the loop and make this scientific committee autonomous, capable of learning from the observations and cases collected by GEIPAN, and then to fully participate in the emergence of what may in the future become a new interdisciplinary science. Next slide, please. My third piece of feedback concerns the most sensitive point, the interface between defence, internal security, secrecy and research. A phenomenon may exist for defence. It can be treated as an operational event, and it can be classified at that point on the defence side, without ever appearing on the GEIPAN side, or ever appearing publicly, as civilian or scientific data. And that's normal in a way. We see it for example with FRIPON. Ten, fifteen years before the FRIPON project was launched, GEIPAN received observations of fireballs and meteors. Then FRIPON appeared. FRIPON collected fireball and meteor cases. And GEIPAN no longer receives them. Case closed. Case closed upstream. And we have somewhat the same thing, I'd say, with the French defence system. A case flies over France. It will be intercepted, analysed, then classified. And indeed defence may consider, at a given moment, that this case did not need to be investigated. And so it stops there. And yet there are scientists who will say: yes, but for us, that can be interesting. At some point we could still do science on phenomena that might be, if only birds, balloons, plasmas, things that can serve as a reference at some point, also to analyse the difficult cases. Because make no mistake. Science too is done, always against a reference. That is, for example, we had a doctoral candidate at GEIPAN, in cognitive psychology, and they were very interested in — you'll laugh, but in Chinese lanterns, absolutely. And why? Because at some point they create an observational reference. We know what a lantern looks like. We don't know what a UFO looks like. There you go, and I've shown you as an illustration the Golfech case. It's a reconstruction I made from a photo published in the Golfech case. It's an overflight of a nuclear power plant by a phenomenon presented by the witnesses as three lights — a triangular phenomenon — which gave GEIPAN a lot of work. And as Gilles said, it was even reclassified three times at some point. We asked ourselves many questions about it. In the end, it stayed in category C. It could have been classified D, but one witness retracted, and we were never able to reach that witness, unfortunately. They vanished, probably also from the shock, from the surprise, of a phenomenon they didn't understand and did not want to confront objectively, in a way. In that case, the question I ask myself is: Is an unidentified drone a UAP? Well, I say yes. That is, an unidentified drone flying over a nuclear plant is indeed a UAP. Not because it would be exotic, not because it factually is an unidentified aerial phenomenon, but because, in the end, we don't know its characteristics. And then the question becomes concrete: who should handle it? Is it Defence? Is it the gendarmerie? Is it Nuclear Safety? Is it GEIPAN? Is it Parliament? Is it the researchers? You'll find in the Senate archives the previous report on the overflights by OPECST, precisely, of nuclear plants in 2014 and 2015, which was very illuminating. The report reported 19 sensitive sites concerned, 40 distinct events, up to 6 nuclear plants overflown simultaneously. And during that parliamentary hearing, one MP noted that we still did not know how people could have organised these overflights over several weeks, despite the surveillance services mobilised.

And a witness at the hearing summarised the unease by mentioning objects "everyone talks about, but no one wants to show." It was complicated, because there was a form of judicial secrecy in force. So we couldn't show photos, we couldn't show videos, but we talked about it. And then, another speaker also said, but in the end, what is it? And what also struck me was the absence of GEIPAN from the debate at the time. I said to myself that the body specialised in identifying unidentified aerospace phenomena, which could ultimately be a player — not perhaps central, but at any rate an important player in analysing these phenomena and their nature — since everyone was questioning their nature — was not present, and could have been. And I think that's the symptom of a deep dichotomy between the world of security, which protects national capabilities, and the civilian and scientific world which seeks to understand. And it's true that the difficulty is that military data can reveal the capabilities of the national system. So it's normal that they be protected, that we don't broadcast, let's say, classified or military videos like that. But nevertheless, I think it's worth questioning the rules for transmitting cases handled by Defence. In particular, how many are also classified, how many are preserved, transmitted, categorised, and how we can better work or manage what is called dual use. These are also European issues. Dual use is how, around technologies that will interest both defence and science, we can, in a way, find bridges. So it's not a matter of making everything public. It's simply a matter of creating the possibility of an airlock between defence and science, between secrecy and analysis. Next slide, please. My fourth piece of feedback concerns Europe. Europe, indeed — because I often say that a UAP, a phenomenon, doesn't know territorial borders. We went to Brussels two years ago with various organisations, and we realised that the European sky doesn't really name UAP. The architecture exists: there is a European regulation, number 376/2014, which organises the reporting, analysis and follow-up of safety events in civil aviation. It provides for things, but this information is then collected by aeronautical organisations and national authorities, filtered and then fed into the European databases. We have a central repository called ECR. And the formats rely on what's called ECCAIRS, which is an ADREP taxonomy of the ICAO. So there is a system, there is an organisation. The problem is that this system filters, first at the national level, UAP — that is, UAP that would potentially concern defence issues will not be reported at the European level. And then, at the European level, in the ECCAIRS taxonomy, the event will not be translated into a UAP category. It doesn't exist. So the moment it doesn't exist, we fall into a category that is completely inadequate, Airprox, or loss of separation, suspected drones, intrusion, ATM events, etc., risk of collision — but we can't retrieve them. So the risk can enter the database, but the unknown can disappear. And so here too, France, with the help of EASA, the European Commission and, in time, Eurocontrol, should have the reporting guides evolve, help have the taxonomies evolve. It's not about creating a spectacular European database on UFOs — it's simply about improving an air-safety system that basically already exists. And also perhaps because we're envied for it — GEIPAN; what I hear in every European country: we don't have a GEIPAN — consider an official mechanism of the GEIPAN type, but this time on the European scale. I'd say: France has the experience of GEIPAN; Europe has the scale; we now need to link the two. Next slide, please. There we go, and I conclude. So my last piece of feedback concerns standards. Today, each country, each body, each database has organised what they call unidentified cases differently, with protocols that don't look alike. In the United States, the unknown has one shape; in France the unknown has another; my unknown is not necessarily your unknown. And the big underlying problem is that if we want to organise science on the international scale, we must talk about the same unknown. And if we don't organise standards to define what the unknown is, and if we don't share those standards and protocols, we won't succeed, and we won't really create science. So I'll conclude on that. Today, learning to recognise the unknown is, I think, first of all — on the last slide, please, yes — above all

knowing how to show modesty, admitting the limits of our knowledge and of what we still have to learn. Refusing the unknown is also to refuse any evolution, any potential for innovation. I haven't spoken about it, but there is a very significant innovation potential behind unknown phenomena. I think France already has a unique asset — the experience of GEIPAN — and it can transform this national experience into public strategy, into a European contribution and into a foundation for international standards. With method, prudence, transparency and courage. Thank you. Thank you very much for this presentation and these proposals, and for the point you made about the interdisciplinary science dimension, etc. That was the point of my first question earlier.

Q&A after Panel 2

To perhaps open the discussion, I have plenty of questions, but perhaps one: are we sufficiently equipped to face these phenomena? We had earlier a presentation that was really very useful on detection means, radars, etc. In particular with American data, Leolabs, etc. We can see clearly that there's a lot of data we can use, which we can deploy with new sensors now being acquired by the Space Command, coming up — new telescopes for airspace and space surveillance. From the standpoint of hardware and infrastructure, are we sufficiently equipped to try to understand what is happening above us? And then perhaps another question of curiosity, maybe for Gilles and for the investigators as a rule. What makes one, at some point, want to embark on a career as an investigator, given the time it consumes? You mentioned it — this work of reporting, cross-referencing, presenting, training as well. It's a community that has to be maintained, and probably also a science to be consolidated. So I had a perhaps more personal question for the members of GEIPAN, also for its director. What makes one, at some point, become engaged in this community of investigators? Motivations for becoming an investigator — people don't lack them. We recruited four new investigators two months ago, out of 70 applications over a year. People take to a certain way of working. Either they're passionate about investigation, about aerospace, about both, about the desire to join a network as well — so we had, well, we had a choice, so we chose people — we don't seek elitism either, so we could have taken people with big scientific or technical backgrounds. No, no; there we have all the socio-professional categories represented in the GEIPAN investigator pool, all sorts of people — all ages, from 23 to over 70. A little personal experience? I think for the different investigators, the context that led them to apply and to practice investigation within GEIPAN is quite varied. There is of course an interest in the subject. I can testify to personal experience. I've been in the ufological milieu for nearly 50 years now. Unfortunately. So after about ten years of discovering the milieu, of discovering the problem, discovering all this, I began working in an approach very close to that used by GEIPAN. And I followed GEIPAN in parallel because it existed. It started practically at the same time as me. I actually started at the same time as GEPAN. At the time, we couldn't intervene with GEPAN. It was the old GEPAN and SEPRA. So from the moment there was an opening, I was more and more interested in seeing what GEIPAN was doing. I always followed what it did. And, well, I was contacted. By chance, I was contacted by the first director of GEIPAN, Mr Patenet. We met, we understood each other immediately. And he suggested I come. At the time, there were no investigators — just the expert group. And as soon as the investigators were set up, first the first-level intervener, then the investigators, I applied to join. And luckily I was accepted. And so I've been there ever since. At the time I was working, but now I'm retired. It probably shows. You guess. And now I do it out of passion. It takes up a lot of my time and interests me greatly. So I try to do as much as possible and help my fellow colleagues who will take over. There you go. That's happening... So — a few questions. We'll also be able to talk during the break,

which comes in five minutes. Thank you very much, and thank you for the quality of these exchanges and presentations. I had two small questions on current affairs. Given that there have been some budget cuts for CNES, around 300 million euros over three years, will this significantly impact GEIPAN's activities? And second small question: is GEIPAN also intended, in the event of military conflict, to become a body supporting the military, given that you have various partners in the Air Force, the gendarmerie? Can the activity change, I don't know, from one day to the next for training or other activities? Yes, so there was a review of activities at CNES following budget constraints. So I was asked to do my share. I don't work by project mode. We're not talking about slush funds, we're talking about full costs, human resources, financial resources, technical means — I won't go into the details. So I was asked to make an effort, I did it, and, in the end, I was given back what I had given. So I have absolutely no reduction of my scope of action over the next three years. And on the second question, CNES is a civilian establishment. Part of the activities are linked to the Ministry of the Armed Forces, because the Ministry of the Armed Forces is one of CNES's supervising authorities, but overall everything that stems from military affairs is handled by the Air and Space Force, by the Space Command, and we don't have grounds to intervene there. Unless things change — but I don't see our added value. Thanks for the quality of the presentations. I have a question on the famous 3% of cases that are unidentified after investigation. A priori, it's within these cases that we would expect some scientific or technical pocket we don't understand. And these 3% — first of all, has this figure evolved over time? Are you finding more and more explanations, or not? The other question — I thank Mr Vaillant, because I was a bit frustrated on the scientific side: who actually looks at, analyses this deficit of scientific and technical knowledge? That's the first part. And the second, corollary part: who prescribes the research actions aimed at filling this scientific and technical knowledge deficit? Last question: it's obviously frustrating and I'm sorry about that. It should be parity. Yes. Hello gentlemen. Thank you for your presentation. So I had a question — actually I represent several associations and collectives, so I had a question on behalf of the Taranis association, which set up a UAP capture protocol. What can we do when we are an association producing videos showing phenomena that have been authenticated and that couldn't be explained by GEIPAN consultants, and which have extremely disturbing kinematics, in every way identical to those disclosed by the US authorities? What can we do, with these videos, when there's no follow-up from the competent institutions? Thank you. All testimonies are free at GEIPAN, so you just have to fill in a questionnaire, declare your identity, provide the photos, the videos, answer what you saw, well — where the association saw all this — and there's no particular issue. I don't know why you say we're declining; I'm not aware of any requests from the Taranis association. If it's the Taranis association contacting us, of course we won't respond — we need someone, one can't testify under a pseudonym. It's clear people must declare their reality; they must also have seen with their own eyes what they declare, and from there, if it's admissible, we won't practise apartheid. We'll respond. Yes, on the 3% — well, there are 3–4% of cases, and 106 published on GEIPAN's website, covering both the contemporary GEIPAN and GEPAN, SEPRA. At one point there were a few more — 20 to 25% were categorised as D. It should be said that category D didn't have exactly the same meaning as now. They were cases worth interest... Before D classification, there was a more documentary vocation — there was a pre-classification. And it's true we've tightened it, in the end, with GEIPAN's birth. As for the research activity — that's some of my questions: it's the Group for the Study of unidentified aerospace phenomena. We don't do research. We do very little research at CNES overall. Research is entrusted to universities, to CNRS. We are here to animate it, and there's no question. In addition, I don't know how one would translate this research. There is no thematic to house at CNES. The themes are published on our website, all we work on. There

is no thematic in that area. But overall, it's not for CNES to do research — we can steer it if a community organises itself. A final question before the break. It's him. Thanks, finally. Hello gentlemen, in two seconds. First, thank you for all you've explained. Really, the work you're doing, I find, is fantastic. I work according to Pareto — that is, what becomes of the 3%? And of course the work done before is essential, but what becomes of the 3%? And Mr Vaillant, I thank you deeply for taking a step back, because that's what drives me today. So I'm a citizen, I come here, I'm not a journalist, I work in the private sector, I'm just very interested in the subject and the phenomena. And I was wondering: while of course you raise the subject at a political and societal level, how is it structured, with what means, what approach — that is, not just metric analysis and research, but also research that opens up to all the sciences, and so how do we articulate it, how do we structure it, etc.? Do you identify, in nations close to us, or elsewhere in the world, other bodies, countries, nations open to this kind of construction? Absolutely. And I think it's a diagnosis fully shared. That is, if today we raise this question of standards and how to build science, it's because databases are there, but they are all different. They've all been built historically with different protocols and means. That's one thing. And on the other hand, there's the fact that the science that exists today for UAP — we do have an expert committee at GEIPAN for instance, we have scientists working in their labs, each in their own corner, but it doesn't exist holistically, not comprehensively at the national scale. And it's the same in every country. So what we're trying to do, what we're trying to see, is to gather with different organisations to see how we can, in a way, extract these theses, these research papers that already exist across all scientific fields, to pool them and, in a way, push with organisations like SUAPS, but others, on the international scale, to build a form of international coalition that would support, or at any rate help elicit this form of new science, this science we need. And I wanted to thank — sorry, and I'll release the mic after — because... thank you for organising the colloquium. Thank you for your thanks. And we'll take a short 10-minute break. So we return here at 5:50 p.m. for the last round table. Philippe, I hand over to you for this first presentation,

Philippe Ailleris (UAP Observations Reporting Scheme)

It works. Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. Since the start of this colloquium we've heard various speakers who addressed unidentified aerospace phenomena from historical, sociological, operational, scientific or institutional angles. For my part, I'd like to adopt a slightly different perspective. Rather than asking what these UAP are, I propose we reflect on how we observe and study them. For the real challenge is not only that of the unexplained. It is also a challenge of observation, data production and uncertainty management. That is the reflection I would like to share with you now. Next slide. Next, sorry. So, to structure this presentation, I propose to address now three simple questions. First, what do we actually see when we speak of unidentified aerospace phenomena? Then, how can an observation be transformed into scientifically usable data? And finally, what can the role of institutions be, faced with phenomena that sometimes remain uncertain? In summary, it's a matter of observing, documenting, and then understanding. Let's start with observation. Next. In fact, we must first say that UAP don't just concern witnesses. They also concern scientific and public institutions. And why? Because when an unusual phenomenon is observed in the sky, the public naturally expects explanations grounded in facts. However, institutions are not there to explain every UAP. On the other hand, they can bring their expertise when an observation concerns their fields of competence — for example atmospheric phenomena, astronomy, human technologies or space activities. And precisely, these space activities are today much more visible than a few years ago. This revolution is now directly reflected in UAP reports in Europe. Thanks. So, certainly, one of the most notable evolutions of the past

few years is the increasing visibility of space activities. The two photos shown on screen are good examples. They have sometimes been interpreted as unusual phenomena, whereas they correspond to perfectly identified events linked to rocket launches. Today, more broadly, you have satellites, the international space station, Starlink trains, atmospheric re-entries, or certain phenomena associated with launchers that represent a growing share of the reports. The figures shown on the slide come from statistics established in Belgium and Germany in cooperation with the European EuroUFO.net community, which, for several years, has contributed to the collection and serious analysis of UAP testimonies. The important idea, in fact, is not in the statistics but that space does not only produce scientific data, it is also becoming a growing source of testimonies of unusual observations, and thus of UAP. But if UAP observations raise so many questions, it's also because they are particularly difficult to study scientifically. Next. So, before speaking of data or of the role of institutions, we must call out a fundamental difficulty. If UAP are difficult to study, it's not first because they are mysterious — it's above all because they are unpredictable. In science, we can generally prepare an experiment, repeat measurements and compare results. Here, it's almost the reverse. We don't know where or when a UAP observation will occur. The phenomena are often brief, non-reproducible, and appear outside any suitable instrumental coverage. Add to that another difficulty mentioned earlier. Most observations rely first on a human witness. But the majority of witnesses are neither astronomers, nor pilots, nor specialists in sky observation. They face — often unexpectedly — phenomena they are not used to observing. So it's natural that a large part of the reports ultimately correspond to perfectly identifiable atmospheric, astronomical, aeronautical or space phenomena. But one must add: uncertainty works both ways. Conversely, truly unusual phenomena can also go unnoticed, be insufficiently documented, or be closed too quickly, for lack of sufficient data. The available data is therefore often incomplete or difficult to interpret. Ultimately, the real question is not only what we observed in the sky — it's also what data we have to analyse it. In other words, not all UAP observations bring the same level of information and therefore don't have the same scientific value, as reflected in the simple pyramid shown on the slide. A human testimony at the base can be very useful for signalling a phenomenon, but it rarely provides enough data for a complete analysis. The more instrumental measurements we add, then several independent sensors, the more the scientific value increases. At the top of this pyramid of quality and richness of available data, are of course directly usable physical data. But an extremely rare situation these days. The message is simple. The more numerous the data, the more independent and better documented they are, the more scientific analysis becomes possible. This is where the role of institutions comes in, who can help produce these calibrated data through their infrastructures. But even calibrated data doesn't always provide an immediate explanation. And often, one has to accept living with uncertainty. Next slide, please. Before continuing, I would like to make a small historical digression that illustrates a fascinating fact. Sometimes, phenomena remain unexplained for a long time before science manages to describe them. The historical example on this slide is remarkable: the sprites, elusive luminous phenomena that appear briefly above thunderstorms, at very high altitude. The first reliable testimonies date from the early 20th century, including those of some aviators. But for decades, these observations remained anecdotal, controversial, or simply set aside for lack of instrumental evidence. It wasn't until the late 20th century, thanks to spatial and video imaging, Next, please. The red sprites you see on screen — transient luminous phenomena observed above thunderstorms — illustrate well how science progresses. Indeed, the history of science clearly shows that certain phenomena, long considered anecdotal or poorly understood, could only be explained after the arrival of suitable instruments and better-quality data. Sprites are a perfect example. For several decades, pilots had reported brief luminous phenomena above thunderstorms. For lack of instrumental measurements,

these testimonies remained difficult to interpret and were even rather ignored. Then, in the late 1980s, the first instrumental observations changed the situation. Sprites gradually became a subject of scientific study. Today these phenomena are even studied from the space station. Of course, you can say sprites aren't UAP, but this example perfectly shows that a long-unexplained phenomenon can become understandable when data and instruments progress. This idea leads us naturally to the role of institutions. Next. Thank you. So, after observations and data, one final question arises: what can the role of institutions be? I've added a few on this slide. They obviously don't all have the same mission, these institutions. Some collect and document testimonies. Others help identify the most probable explanations when they fall within their field of expertise. Still others contribute to preserving data, mobilising scientific or technical competencies, or developing analytical methods. Their role can also be to place an observation in its context, to assess the level of uncertainty associated with available information, and to communicate this information clearly and transparently to the public. This reflection is not new, since between 1976 and 1978, the Prime Minister of Grenada, Sir Eric Gairy, for three years addressed the UN General Assembly to try to promote research on UAP. Even today, various organisations continue this reflection, each within its own competencies. But what's important to underline is that for a scientific institution, engagement cannot rest on curiosity alone. It requires a clear mandate, scientific relevance, societal interest, institutional willingness to invest in the topic, and, when necessary, international cooperation. The objective remains the same: produce reliable knowledge, reduce uncertainty where possible, and inform the public in a rigorous and responsible manner. But fundamentally, UAP represent only part of a much larger challenge. We observe today an increasingly complex sky. We have more drones and flying craft of various kinds, we have more satellites, more rocket launches, more data — and also more unusual observations. The stakes concern science, data quality, air and space safety, public information and international cooperation. But they also concern our collective capacities to develop a true scientific culture in the face of uncertainty, distinguishing established facts from hypotheses and fostering a data-based debate. New technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, offer today new and unprecedented perspectives for exploiting large volumes of data and detecting unusual phenomena. Finally, I'd say these stakes also contribute to maintaining trust between citizens, scientists and institutions, by providing transparent, rigorous and proportionate responses to the available knowledge. They also remind us that science progresses by remaining open to new observations, while demanding evidence commensurate with claims. The unknown must therefore be neither accepted without evidence nor dismissed on principle, but studied methodically. And the last slide, thank you. To conclude, I'll come back to the three ideas from the start: observe, document, understand. We now live in an increasingly complex aerial and space environment, where certain unusual observations cannot always be identified immediately. This doesn't allow us to infer their origin. But it justifies pursuing observations, improving data and continuing research. Science doesn't progress by accepting all hypotheses, nor by rejecting them systematically. Ultimately, the challenge is not to defend extraordinary conclusions. The challenge is to improve our capacity to study unusual phenomena with open-mindedness, rigour, method and critical spirit. That is how the unexplained can gradually become an object of knowledge. Thank you for your attention.

Baptiste Friscourt (correspondent, The Debrief, Sentinel News)

We now pass the floor to Baptiste Fricourt. Hello, thank you for having me today. I'd like first to come back — as it seemed to me that little definition has been given, on the subject, to what a UAP is. A UAP is an unknown. The work of science is to move what is unknown into the known. There will always be UAP; we'll always discover new things. Now, we have to address the question: which UAP are we interested in? Are we looking for plasmas in the upper atmosphere? Are we looking for advanced platforms capable of performance surpassing what we can achieve in our arsenals? That is the question. I'd like to start with a textbook case — the Belgian wave. It happened recently, and at very close range from us. It unfolded between 1989 and 1991, concentrated on Wallonia and Brussels. There would be more than 2,000 observations during this period, up to several dozen observations in a single day. These observations were also made by gendarmes who pursued by vehicle these objects flying at very low altitude. Aerial interceptions were carried out. Each time, these objects managed to break the F-16s' radar lock. The pilots describe these objects moving off at high speed or being invisible from their cockpit, yet visible from the ground according to the gendarmes. So we're dealing with complex platforms — these are not simple situations. There is the official report by Major Lambrecht that reviews, for example, the operations conducted between 30 and 31 March 1990, where there were nine interception attempts. Each time, the objects moved off. So what is particularly interesting in this case is the political intervention. On 16 December, the Minister of Defence Poncelet took the floor and said that what had been observed were nightclub lights being reflected by the clouds. On 18 December, Colonel De Brouwer, head of the Air Force, declared this was not possible — those lights had a radar signature. And so we find ourselves before a public that has two completely different accounts, from two figures of authority. And despite all this, despite the number of reports, despite the interceptions, there was no panic. We have a textbook case that took place a few hundred kilometres from us, showing that there is no panic among the population, even in extremely significant cases. So that's a first finding we can already draw from studying this phenomenon, even at very great distance. Even considering these were elements that were perfectly normal and had been misinterpreted, it did not provoke panic. The second thing I'd like to come back to is the European part. For several dozens of years — and one must salute the work of European MPs on this — questions have been raised with the European Commission concerning the topic of UAP. The Commission's response is systematically the same: it's a matter of national competence for member countries, it doesn't fall under European competence. On the other hand, they are perfectly willing to use, for example, the Horizon programme to launch a research programme on the topic. You can, for instance, look at the recent questions from the MEP from Massy, where exactly this is explained. It's not a research objective, the European Commission has no information, it doesn't fall within space-law domains. And regarding the setting up of specific tools for pilots, they explain that this already exists within EASA, the European Aviation Safety Agency. The problem is that these pilot reports are classified as secret. Only two countries in Europe have these reports available. Switzerland and the United Kingdom. And they are extremely interesting. If you just look at the UK reports, on 19 May 2025, over central London, one of the most heavily monitored areas in Europe, at 3,000 metres and 450 km/h, an A320 observes a triangular object passing a few metres from its cockpit. And there, we have to ask about aviation safety. This question was put to EASA representatives at the event organised by Michaël Vaillant at the European Parliament. He said the reporting system already existed and there was no question to ask. One can ask: why are people more afraid of these reports in Europe than in the UK or Switzerland? What we do have, in contrast — contrary to what Mr Vaillant said — is that we already have scientific programmes working on the subject, but they work on a scientific timescale, which is not the press's timescale, nor the media's. We have several research programmes or draft research programmes currently

underway in universities worldwide, in Europe and in France, some with the capacity to set up observatories specifically for UAP, to obtain indisputable data meeting academic standards. Behind me you see an example: the IFEX programme at the University of Würzburg, run by Professor Hakan Kayal, with support from the army. We don't need a superstructure above; that's the normal way science works. To come back to the UK: every country on the planet has been faced with this phenomenon, which doesn't wait to be handled. It arrives, and it's up to the government in place to react. I won't do the history of every country; I'll focus only on a few key periods. There are numerous cases in the UK which led to the creation of two groups. A secret military office and a policy office also military — public, sorry, also military. Recently the image of the Calvine UFO has surfaced, photographed in 1990, retrieved last year by Dr David Clark, currently in study at Sheffield Hallam University and Andrew Robinson. The original prints, which had been given to a newspaper, had been confiscated by the defence forces. There too, we may ask: is it really necessary to wait all this time for universities to be able to study just photographic traces, whether authentic or false? The work of the House of Lords should also be saluted. In recent years, the Lords have — I don't want to say harassed, but were extremely insistent with Ministry of Defence representatives regarding questions on UAP. The MoD's answer is that this does not represent a national defence issue. Here too, when we take up the Airprox report of 19 May 2025, if an object passing over London unmonitored does not represent a national security issue post-9/11, one can ask questions. On the slide, you see the Condign report made in 2000. It was a report reviewing several years of military studies on the topic of UAP. And inside there is a very interesting sentence: it recommends that British pilots not approach UAP and not attempt to intercept them, since this has caused, in similar situations, losses among allied forces. If that isn't a national security issue, one can ask questions. You also have Professor Michael Bohlander at Durham University who has created the declaration on the legitimacy of SETI and UAP scientific research, hosted by Durham University but not co-sponsored. We're still in a scientific intermediate stage. This point is very important but very underestimated. When I spoke earlier about the definition of what a UAP is — are we looking for platforms that surpass all our capabilities, or plasmas in space? To put this condition into play, one must include SETI research. SETI is an abbreviation for the search for extraterrestrial intelligence. Curiously, SETI institutions have always been extremely hostile to conducting research at the same time on the UFO topic. I have testimonies from scientists I've interviewed in my role as a journalist who said they'd had their paper refused because SETI organisations consider the topic isn't legitimate in SETI research. Next. In Spain, as early as 1991, you had a huge operation of declassification of military reports. And going through them, you'll find many reports showing that there were overflights over military bases, whose nature is inexplicable. This generally took place in the 1970s. In 2018, we also had the new national security director, Colonel Pedro Baños, who declared that some UFO cases were also secret American technologies. So when we talk about advanced platforms, we shouldn't forget that there are also technical capabilities hidden from the public by defence necessity. In Italy, you have an Air Force cell which every year publishes an annual report on the number of objects encountered, the investigations carried out, and their distribution across the territory. You also have research carried out in the Vatican archives by Dr Pasulka to find ancient cases. One may also salute the work of Jacques Vallée, present here in the room, who conducted very long archival research to find these ancient cases. You'll find them in "Wonders in the Sky," and there it really raises a question. That is, if we have advanced platforms that existed before the 19th century, that raises questions about their origin. Next. In Russia — Russia has an immense history on the subject, I'll go quickly. In recent years, the institutions have gone silent due to the Ukraine conflict. However, we still have in the press testimonies from pilots saying that during their careers, they have

encountered these objects in the sky, and you find an almost permanent symmetry between American public statements and Russian public statements. They show that yes, they too are on the subject. In 2024, the Keldysh Institute launched a call for witnesses to establish a research programme. It is an institute that works on very high energies. At the fall of the Wall — interesting point — Russian admirals declared observing unknown objects in the depths. A testimony corroborated in the United States by Dr McGwier, who, when on mission in a nuclear submarine, observed a huge craft pass alongside the submarine and force it to surface. This has also been confirmed by Admiral Gallaudet. France having the second-largest marine exclusive economic zone, it would be interesting to ask our submariners whether they have encountered the same objects. We've had the presence of the Air and Space Force, we have GEIPAN devoted to aerospace phenomena. Now that we have over 70 years of data extraction, we know these objects are capable of moving through any medium without any difficulty. What is the Navy's point of view? One of the countries most advanced on the subject politically is Japan, which made a great contribution to the colloquium. It has announced it is ready to collaborate with any other nation seeking to work on the subject. There is a parliamentary group led by former Defence Minister Yasukazu Hamada, and multiple Defence Ministers since 2020 have all declared that the topic is important, that they work with the United States, that they examine the reports of their own pilots. In Chile, since 1997, the military has had a permanent study group on the subject. In China, the advantage there is that there is absolutely no taboo on the topic, since it has even been encouraged by the government, as they wanted to use the population as a tool for detecting these objects. And within Chinese tradition and legend, these objects are referenced. As early as 2014, they organised the Five Continents Conference. They themselves try to build a political consensus on their side. Researchers from around fifteen nations are invited to take part. In 2021, we learn that a military UFO study group is capable of anticipating UFO trajectories using artificial intelligence, and that they use it to conduct interception missions. In 2026, we learn they're examining with great attention the American archives put online by the Trump presidency, and in an article that went unnoticed at the time. Top left, the Chinese army circulates a propaganda article whose title, picked up by the national press, is that the Chinese army has conducted interception missions against UFOs. The article itself is several pages long. And that's the title chosen by the newspapers to relay the information. Inside you have the testimony of a pilot who declares that between the 1980s and 1990s, an unknown object entered Chinese airspace and they conducted an emergency operation to intercept it, and that the interception succeeded. Next? In Uruguay, the Air Force has been investigating the subject since 1979 and maintains very close agreements with the United States. And that's quite interesting, because 1979 is the moment when the United States declared the topic to be uninteresting. And yet, they were encouraging South American countries to create their own investigation groups on the topic. Next. So now we come to a big one. Brazil is probably one of the territories most densely subjected to the phenomenon. To take a starting point among others, you have in 1977 the Colares case, where you have a population living in a village who find themselves with wounds, burns — they describe seeing objects arriving, shooting light beams, beams capable of passing through walls without leaving traces on them — really abnormal things. In view of the damage observed, the Brazilian army came on site to conduct an investigation. Even today, those documents have not been made public. Some have begun to be released, but no photographic or video document has been made public. Jacques Vallée, who is still in the room, was one of the investigators on site. One case that has very recently come back into the news is the Varginha case, which took place in 1996 — a crash case with close encounters that followed, which remained for a long time in ufological mythology. As it happens, in 2026, Aldo Rebelo, former Defence Minister of Brazil, declared that yes, this case did indeed occur. Between 2022 and 2025, you also had hearings at the Brazilian

Parliament on the topic, with invited experts. Canada has also devoted attention to the topic. Canada has a very long experience of the phenomenon, with numerous State groups, including Project Magnet for example, which tackled the subject very seriously. And there, faced with the scale of the wave of information coming from the United States since 2017, the head of the science office launched an update of Canadian data, including a population survey, in which 27% of the population declared having seen an abnormal object. Even if you take the 5% of high-confidence, highly abnormal cases in GEIPAN's statistics, you still end up with several tens of thousands of completely abnormal cases in the Canadian population. Next and next. We move to the United States. Very briefly then. Since 2017, we've had a wave of information leaked from Defence. Between 2017 and 2020, there were briefings between pilots and political officials. From 2022 onwards, you have a series of hearings in which witnesses, government representatives, military personnel come to declare that yes, the phenomenon is real. Yes, it has been observed, and apparently the information isn't being escalated. This continues today, led by American elected officials, as we mentioned earlier. Representative Luna, who has asked for an amnesty for all persons who would have interesting information. And here, however, one must make a distinction: it's "would have interesting information." That doesn't mean that the information from those persons is confirmed — that's the preliminary to the investigation. Lastly, to respond to what has been said — may I have two more minutes? Two. Because otherwise I can't talk about France, which would be a bit of a pity. So, in France, the start of the topic is often traced back to 1947 in the United States, but in 1946 we have in intelligence records a memo to the French President warning him that in the Nordic countries, objects have been seen and are completely abnormal. We're after the Second World War. At the time, we don't understand, Germany has collapsed, we're in 1946, we see objects crossing the Baltic Sea and arriving on the shores of the Nordic countries. So we know that already the French authorities were aware. In 1952 and 1954, you have a great wave of reports, which pushes the MPs of the time to force the military to create a military group. So we have one of the oldest roots of military study of UAP within France. In 1970 and 1975, you have a new wave of observations. It will be taken up by the Institute for Advanced National Defence Studies. We have Robert Galley's interview, the Minister of Defence, who declared, showing the secret files in front of journalists, that yes, French pilots do see these objects, and that these objects are abnormal. He even specifies that of the number of investigations conducted by gendarmes on cases of close encounters, they cannot be set aside. In 2000, we have the publication of the COMETA report, UFOs and Defence, also seeing UFOs as a national security issue. In 2008, we have the creation of the Sigma committee. In 2021, they publish their progress report, which I strongly recommend, if you're looking for technical information on what a UFO report is, what the electromagnetic signatures, the radiation effects are — you'll have it all inside, it's a huge 400-page work. We arrive in 2025 with the PDSF, the Paris Defense and Strategy Forum, which will host a round table on UAP. In 2025, we also have Vision Radar at the Military School, which will organise a colloquium on UAP. And in PDSF 2026, it was mentioned within the military foresight sections. At present, in France, several universities are reflecting on how to approach the topic, or even create a research programme. Lastly, a very small aside. He thinks he's on his channel, he's used to a 2h45 format, I warn you. A research programme proposal has also been submitted to a major French agency. From my investigation for your briefing, I've been able to contact French military pilots, particularly in the naval air forces. They have confirmed that there is observation of these advanced platforms that are inexplicable, and I remind you that these are military pilots — their training is to identify absolutely everything they can see in their airspace. And when I asked them the frequency, they declared it was 3 to 4 cases a year within their unit. When I asked them why they weren't reporting the information up to CAPCODA, which we spoke of

earlier, they said that the risk to their careers was too great. When I conducted exactly the same investigation among civilian pilots, they gave me exactly the same answer. The risk to their careers is too great. And what's very interesting is that it's a perceived risk. That is, we have a few cases outside Europe where pilots have been sidelined for declaring having seen a UAP. But if we take for example the example of Jacques Crin in France, a pilot who saw a completely abnormal object and whose testimony is extremely solid, no measure was taken against him. And when I asked them what could change the situation, they declared it would be a member of the general staff saying that there was a need to report these objects to higher authorities. Thank you.

Sylvain Maisonneuve (former ministerial advisor, author)

And for the last presentation, we hand the floor to Sylvain. Thank you very much, Member of the Assembly. Thank you, gentlemen MPs, for organising this event. It's really very courageous of you. And so I wanted to salute that. I'm going to improvise part of this because I thought there would be more substantial developments on the history of the phenomenon. And obviously we're not in the American, European or other spectrum, we're essentially French, and so I wanted to bounce off that a bit, so I'll improvise a part. Just to say, to introduce myself briefly, I served nearly 5 years as an adviser in ministerial cabinets, as adviser in charge of business, and I arrived on the occasion of the Covid crisis, and I left after the Cyclone Chido crisis that had devastated Mayotte. So I was also present, even though I hadn't worked on the file, when for example Russia invaded Ukraine, and we were being assured that it was obviously unthinkable and just an exercise. What I take away from the mechanics of power, in crisis or normal situation for that matter, is of course many positive points. There is much intelligence, much deliberative intelligence at the level of the State, but there are also really structural weaknesses, and I count four of them. The first is that we're not very good — I particularly saw this during Covid — at both holistically and granularly observing and analysing what is happening abroad. Benchmarking really is a point of difficulty for us. Second weakness — and it's cultural — we have a mindset that is conformist. That is, we struggle to think outside frameworks that have already presented themselves, on which we have a track record to reason from. The third is our software, which is a regulatory software. We need to be able to grasp, define and qualify to address a topic. By definition, when we're on the UAP topic, it's eminently more complex and so the software crashes. Fourth and final difficulty — well, demonstration. It's a plot by the reptilians, as everyone knows. Fourth weakness: the feedback of data, and there indeed it's extremely variable between each service because you have, of course, directorates of excellence at Bercy — the Treasury, the Directorate General of Enterprises, etc. Things of immense quality. Other central administrations, particularly outside Bercy, are a bit weaker. In the armed forces, obviously, the level is also excellent. But whatever the case, even in administrations of excellence, we see that the flow of data upward, and of qualitative data, is in reality much more complex than one thinks. One should not believe that everything is available, etc. as easily as that. There's a real operational issue of data collection and processing at the political level. With this preamble laid down — and I hope I won't talk as much as Baptiste — these elements, if you will, I have in mind when I look at the UAP phenomenon. Because fundamentally, we have two ways to address it. Either we tell ourselves it's bullshit — that is, either we have a phenomenon, or rather phenomena, that in reality will be explained extremely easily once our technical tools progress, once we have more AI to do much more systematic analysis. And so on, there is indeed a share of conspiracy theory too, of cults. I gather some had been distributing leaflets in front of the Assembly earlier. I don't know if they had much success, but there you are. And so, on this

really, from this point of view, one either considers it's not credible — and that's what's dominant today culturally and politically. You can well imagine that in preparing my book, I contacted quite a few ministers, because I started writing when I was still in office moreover. None of them considered it a serious credible topic worthy of study, etc. Including some who had had responsibility for CNES in their careers, and it wasn't through a failing, or a closed mind, or anything else — it's just that they didn't even ask themselves the question. Yet, when we look at it closely, and that's really the stake, I think, of this colloquium and what will follow, I hope — we must look at things sceptically, pragmatically, and distinguish what is established, what is debated, and what is to be set aside. What is established today is that in France we have pilots who do indeed see things and don't report them to their hierarchy. What is established is that abroad, we have pilots who have testified to objects with technological capabilities that exceed, as far as we know, the means we have — with acceleration capacities equivalent to several thousand G — I remind you that the wings of a fighter aircraft come off at about ten G. With also behaviours, extremely atypical trajectories, angles of 80 degrees and so on. And so, with this experience, which is obviously my subjective experience and therefore perfectly debatable and open to criticism, I tell myself there's perhaps a topic we have to address. And I think that is the case, all the more so as there are a number of elements that make me think we've well past the stage of weak signals. When I observe a former CIA director speaking openly of objects that can't be explained and that, according to him — I'm not saying it's my opinion — may fall under different forms of life, that has to give pause. And that was the CIA director under Obama, John Brennan. When we have the Director of Intelligence, who is today CIA director under Donald Trump, John Ratcliffe, saying there are indeed technological capabilities far exceeding what the United States is capable of, and against which they cannot defend themselves, and that they don't think they're Chinese or Russian. He doesn't mention Europe, as usual, but in any case one can see where his gaze is pointing. Avril Haines, Director of Intelligence under Joe Biden, who has also made extremely strong statements. Obviously, a number of American presidents — Baptiste said it — Canadian, Japanese officials too, etc., who are mobilising on the question. So today we have weak signals largely activated. And yet, are we today addressing the topic with the political weight necessary? Do we have tools? The question is whether they are sufficiently sized both qualitatively and quantitatively to meet these challenges? In my view, the answer is no. And it exposes us. It exposes us because we can clearly see, for example, that we have no reaction regarding the movements of declassification, of videos, of reports, etc., taking place today in the United States. One might think it's a manoeuvre for electoral diversion. One may also try to form one's own opinion and analyse it on rational grounds, to think: if there's a next round of declassification, with clear, high-resolution videos showing genuinely atypical things, how do we react? How do we communicate? How do we address the subject? What do we think? How would we react if we had — as was the case in the United States, with declassified archives, testimonies, and even the subject of an international treaty between Russia and the Soviet Union at the time — overflights of objects over nuclear bases, at Minot and Malmstrom, with electromagnetic pulses disarming the weapons systems. Overflights also of critical facilities — we had a private testimony that wasn't escalated, on a French nuclear plant a few years ago in northern France, fighter pilots, we've mentioned. And so we have a real subject from this point of view of, once again, taking the topic into consideration and moving information up to a proper level. And so from there, what do we do — and I'll try to go faster on the second part. The colloquium is a first step, but of course a courageous first step, but to my mind at any rate — this is what I invite you to do, gentlemen MPs — a first step, and not the last, because I think that even in the elements presented, there is obviously much material to instruct, to dig into and to challenge, so as not to be content with the answers given. And to my mind, a fact-finding mission, for example,

would truly be a very interesting response to work on. How, for example, in the form of open questions, could we work on the subject from the standpoint of public action? First, define a method, and then define a governance. On method, three levels. First level, collect data. We've said a lot today about where we concretely stand in terms of data collection. And there we should audit our governance, our tools and our processes for collecting this data — whether it's pilot testimony or radar sensor data, whether civilian or military — we should not be content with the answers provided, we must be able to dig and have a holistic view of the whole. We should also know concretely: if a Rafale pilot wants to give a testimony, are they today guided? Are there processes and instructions in place? Are they secure enough to bring it comfortably to their hierarchy? How do our observation infrastructures function today? Whether civilian or military? Are they set correctly to detect atypical trajectories? All this arises just like GEIPAN's mission, on which I no longer have much time to come back. But there too, to my mind, work could be done. The role of the Ministry of the Armed Forces too. And also strategic monitoring. I think today we need to have our own opinion on what's going on elsewhere, particularly in the United States. The second level is qualifying this data. So that, has been widely said, I won't dwell on it, but it's how we process it rigorously, scientifically, so that it's usable. How we analyse what comes from elsewhere. And finally, the third level is how we operate this data. So how we trace a three- or five-year roadmap to ensure we can improve our collection capabilities regularly, including through the provision of training. To integrate additional detection requirements, for example in our tenders for technical observation systems. How do we work on anticipation scenarios? How do we develop international collaborations? So it's all these fields that would deserve to be exploited, looked at. And finally, beyond method, governance is needed. There I'll be very brief. It is absolutely necessary to determine precisely who does what — because when that isn't the case, everyone acts and no one is responsible. And we know very well how that ends. And it must obviously be an authority positioned at the right level. Positioned at the right level means having concrete operational levers to move data up and analyse it — that's obviously key. And second, being high enough to be able to speak to and inform the political level. If it's an office unknown to the authorities, it obviously works much less well. So there we are — my final word, if you will, is that we regularly speak of strategic autonomy — it may be a bit strong to consider that on UAP, we've reached that stage. Though when we look again at pilot testimonies and observations being made, the subject arises, and we must obviously not develop a sensationalist or catastrophist vision of the subject — nor necessarily a purely military one, either. Nor should we — and this is a fault too often found — skip steps and start speculating on the origin and nature of the phenomenon. What is needed is first to be able to qualify it, document it, to understand it and form our own opinion. And I think that for the country of Descartes, that's the best we can do. Thank you.

Q&A after Panel 3

We'll take a few more questions before concluding this day. Excellent. Just quick questions. We had said 7 p.m. end, it's 10 to. Earlier, the question about whistleblower protection wasn't answered. Listen, I don't think it's for me to answer. I think the director of GEIPAN raised it earlier. There is already recognition of the protection of testimonies given. I don't know at what level today, particularly legislatively, we can further develop and secure this status, knowing that, unlike in the United States, in France there is already a whistleblower status. But not only that. The question is what is happening in the United States compared to France. The last two presentations were very good because they addressed this question. But there is a striking contrast between what Paulina Luna is calling for — that is, giving voice to persons who know where the objects are, who know where the non-human corpses are — that is

nevertheless huge, absolutely huge. And in France, we are completely out of step with that, completely out of step. Here, the declassified files — that's what members of Congress are asking for. They are exasperated by the three waves of declassification, they want photos, corpses, that's what they're asking for. And so, if we get to this stage, how does France manage this situation? Well. So — wait, wait. We'll take the questions, since in this case I've answered you: there's a status that allows possibly to be able to be along this line. Beyond that, honestly, we can't do much more, except precisely to protect the testimony, to secure it as well. But we've seen in the testimonies and previous interventions, that today, I think, everyone is free to be able both to describe the observations made and to file them, particularly with the competent authorities. So I don't quite see. No, but I don't know. Allow me simply to finish answering. And if that doesn't satisfy you, I'm sorry. But I think that, as things stand today, there is this status that is, not a definitive answer, and can no doubt evolve in the future, but at any rate it's clearly the state, the situation, which is quite different from that of the United States. In any case, we're not closed to continuing the exchange on the subject, so that we can perhaps have more details than we didn't necessarily have today in this colloquium. I think precisely, the debate is quite interesting from this point of view — that is, the question you're asking is one from very well-informed people. You are also a naval historian, and you've reacted to the subject. I even bought your book on the Russian navy, so I do see what you're talking about. But in fact, we're not talking about the same country. That is, today, the public debate in France isn't at all — not in the least — on the topics of the recovery of craft or bodies. That's another planet, what we're talking about. And so, as General de Gaulle said, politics is done only on the basis of realities, and today, the public debate has, to my mind, the merit of crossing a very important step, thanks — I say this without any flattery — to the courage of the two parliamentarians here, and honestly, our objective should first be to ensure that the instruments set up to collect information on what happens in French skies are truly audited and worked on. And then, I agree with you that the topic of the debates driving the House of Representatives or the Senate on the recovery of craft, on reverse-engineering programmes, etc., arises in the United States. Here, if it does, it's more from the angle of anticipation exercises as they can be conducted. I'll say something silly — at the DGA, the body working on anticipation scenarios, the term escapes me, but no matter — the Red Team, exactly. Culturally, we're not yet at the point where this kind of subject could be addressed at the political level. In any case, that's how I understand the file quite frankly. And that's why I think we'll take things step by step. First of all, thank you very much for organising this colloquium, and I have a question. In terms of spatial observation, can pollution in low orbit pose a problem in the long term? That's an important question. In orbital traffic management, there is clearly a congestion issue in the long term on certain orbits, particularly low ones. And we know well — it was mentioned earlier — Starlink, you mentioned it, among others, but there are lots of constellations appearing and oversaturating this section, which needs to be managed optimally. And it's true that many atmospheric re-entries also heavily pollute the upper atmosphere. It's a topic on which there's more and more independent science and research, but which must be heavily funded. We must inject even more money into CNES, because yes, the question of the sustainability of space activities is raised, as we over-deploy in these orbits. But I think it's an important question, and indeed there are many UAP-type observations that are in fact atmospheric re-entries. But in any case, that would be another colloquium, in my view. If you're interested, I'll launch a study on it. And perhaps a supplementary answer, since OPECST, the Parliamentary Office for the Evaluation of Scientific and Technological Choices, has for about fifteen years now, worked through diplomatic channels for better consideration, particularly in European and international projects, of the issue of debris and low-orbit saturation. It's obviously very long work, since we also need to convince our partners, particularly the Americans, to commit

from a deontological standpoint too, and to a reduction of environmental impacts in this space. So of course we continue, particularly at the IAC and other international space diplomatic events, as far as France carries this voice. To add one element, it's a real question that has been a huge problem. And the solution found by Dr Beatriz Villarreal of the Nordita Institute was to take photographic plates from before the space age. That way, one is certain that the objects in them were either artefacts, or objects that were abnormal. And the idea is then to extract a statistical signature of these objects, determine the spectroscopy and then look today at which objects in Earth orbit have the same spectrum. Hello, thank you, over here. We speak of the United States at the end of the colloquium, and ultimately it was, I believe, the United States that motivated the existence of this colloquium in reaction to the declassification of documents. I may be wrong, and you may correct me. Precisely, perhaps for the MPs organising the colloquium: in your view, why is the Trump administration declassifying these documents at present? Mr Maisonneuve seemed to indicate it wasn't only an attention-diversion manoeuvre. Is it something more? How do you view this action across the Atlantic? To answer the question: from persons truly inside the process, it's a real desire on his part, but because he made a political commitment on it. That is, it was part of his campaign promises. Then, elected officials came to him to remind him he'd made that promise. It's along that line. From those inside the process, there is no double intent behind it. And allow me to add, it's not a Trumpist topic, because the movements — particularly the reports — were also carried out under the Biden administration. So it's very important to say it's not just a Trumpist topic, because we're not all Trumpists in the room, I think. We said we'd alternate, so it goes there. Hello, I can't help noticing that this colloquium, two men have invited twelve men across three panels and zero women. And so, in 2026, that's quite remarkable. But beyond the reproach, it's a real question: is it an organisational bias, or is it that these phenomena, from a sociological standpoint, have a link between the male gender and interest in these phenomena? And if so, for what reasons? So, I said the sociologist has to answer. There is sociological research on motivations, on the structuring of UFO communities, etc. I'm not necessarily a specialist. I admit, 15 years ago, I had begun an ethnography. Because I was a CNRS researcher, it interested me, it intrigued me, but I didn't take it further. But no doubt, there'd be need to conduct the study. And here, clearly, it's ultra-biased. When we composed our panel, we noticed it, and moreover we are two men — we plead guilty. So yes, there is undoubtedly framing from that point of view. And it's true that if we did a ratio in the room, it's still largely male. We'll do better next time, really. But yes, no doubt in the sociology of these communities there'd be something to do from that point of view. Also by comparison elsewhere, I don't know, I haven't taken the inquiry further. But that is an invitation from you to pursue the inquiry. Yes, yes, I saw you — but I saw you, I saw you, I saw you. Oh no, but you can well imagine. Yes. Yes.

Closing remarks

Listen — what we propose is to conclude the colloquium here. We thank you very sincerely. We can applaud all the speakers. They were all of high quality. And above all, this leaves room for many questions, and many points of improvement as well. We've said this among ourselves during this colloquium, with Arnaud Saint-Martin. We will also propose a number of recommendations arising from this colloquium to value all the work of interaction that has taken place today. And I think perhaps this initiative will call for others. Once again, a big thank you to everyone, including our staff for the organisation at the service of the Assembly, and for the room management. So many thanks to all, and see you soon! I'd like to add just one thing. First, thank you Pierre, we've worked well together. It was a baroque pairing — right-left, transpartisan — and it worked well. And in any case, we see each other at

OPECST. That's also worth underlining. We do manage to work together at the Assembly. I also note that this colloquium was filmed — multiply filmed, in fact. It will be viewable in a few weeks, I don't know, Tomek. We'll see. In any case, it's recorded and will be online afterwards, so what is said today — and there are quite a few people who couldn't come, because clearly there was strong interest. It will be publicly available too, and that's an important gesture — this happens here in full transparency, we've had debates that I found fascinating, and it will circulate afterwards, of course. That was an important point. And of course Pierre and I are speaking about the colloquium — there is media interest too, we mustn't hide that. So we'll continue to talk about it. There are a few interviews awaiting us. So these — in quotes — recommendations, not yet fully formalised — well, through discussing and exchanging, we'll of course begin to formalise something. I can't say much more at the moment. Perhaps that will be disappointing for some here. But at any rate, it's a first point, a modest milestone. A moment which, in any case, I found fascinating. All the speakers, who presented with a variety of styles, approaches, and personal interests in the topic — I found it of very high quality. So thank you very much, thank you very much to each for coming here. Thank you for your patience, because after all it's four hours of colloquium — that's not nothing. And, until next time, I hope.