# Constitutional Duties and Responsibilities

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Many of us at work have tried to communicate some critically vital information up the management chain of command. But it always seems that either the big boss just never gets the message or the boss does get that information but it has been watered down and made palatable by somebody between you and the big boss.

So to ensure that the boss isn’t made unhappy by bad news, middle-level management and staff do their best to filter, spin and squash troubling information from ever reaching the big boss.

So what does this have to do with UFOs? Everything!

Let’s talk about responsibility.

Congress has authority over financial and budgetary matters, through the enumerated power to collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States.

You would think that congressional representatives would be concerned about an issue that affects the defense and general welfare of the United States. Especially since Article I of the Constitution gives Congress the power to declare war via the War Powers Clause.

From April 29 to May 3, 2013, Stephen Bassett of the Paradigm Research Group produced a “Citizen Hearing on Disclosure” at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. The public hearing was modeled after a congressional hearing that had 42 researchers and military/agency/political witnesses from 10 countries who testified for 30 hours over five days before six former members of Congress regarding UFO events, evidence confirming UFOs and the extraterrestrial presence engaging the human race. The hearing was filmed and webcast.

Paradigm sent DVDs of that hearing to every congressional representative on Capitol Hill. When congressional staffers were polled later for receipt of the DVDs, not a single staffer acknowledged that their office had received the DVDs.

In 2014, Paradigm launched the Congressional Hearing/Political Initiative, which focused on seeking hearings for the scores of military/agency/political witnesses who were ready to testify on Capitol Hill about UFOs and the extraterrestrial presence. Despite Bassett’s valiant lobbying efforts, congressional hearings never came about.

This was a clear example of a civilian group attempting to get the attention of Congress via lobbying. Too bad Paradigm didn’t have the vast financial resources of the National Rifle Association.

On a citizen activist level, this reporter’s own repeated efforts to arrange a meeting with a senior staff member from New York Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand was a frustrating and wasted effort. For the record, both senators were sent a copy of my book *UFO Sightings Desk Reference*, which contains eye-opening and pervasive data.

When I asked Schumer’s staff four months later if they had received my letter, they said no and stated that the letter probably got lost in the congressional mailroom. I pointed out that my letter had a 2 ½ pound book stapled to it!

To their credit, Sen. Schumer’s Syracuse staff did request another copy of my letter, and an additional copy of my book, which I personally delivered to them. The staffer told me he’d get it into the hands of the right people in the senator’s D.C. office. In eight months’ time I have yet to receive an acknowledgment of any kind.

Finally, I made a press request for commentary from Sen. Schumer in regard to the December mainstream media coverage of the Pentagon’s, Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program. The senator’s media point of contact never returned my call.

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand’s staff began shunning me upon the first mention of the term UFO and has never answered any letters or press queries.

So much for expecting my state’s U.S. senators to do their constitutional duty: providing for the common defense and general welfare of the United States.

But maybe it’s not the senators’ fault. Maybe their staffs and advisers seem to be functioning like characters from the Hans Christian Andersen 1837 story “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” as the couriers whofiltered, spun and squashed troubling information from ever reaching the emperor’s ears.

The mission of the Department of Defense is to provide the military forces needed to deter war and to protect the security of our country.

There was a Dec. 16, 2017, *New York Times* article about the Defense Department’s $22 million Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program.

Former military intelligence official Luis Elizondo offered several statements in his Oct. 4, 2017, resignation letter to Secretary of Defense James Mattis with regard to that program, such as “the many accounts from the Navy and other services of unusual aerial systems interfering with military weapon platforms and displaying beyond-next-generation capabilities. There remains a vital need to ascertain capability and intent of these phenomena for the benefit of the armed forces and the nation.”

On Feb. 20, I had a thoughtful and informative telephone conversation with Elizondo, who now works for To The Stars Academy of Arts and Science. (The bulk of that interview will appear in a future article.) Elizondo told me that Secretary Mattis had yet to be shown Elizondo’s resignation letter.

I asked Elizondo about what he considered was the most frustrating part of his job? “Oh my goodness,” he replied, “the inability to tell senior leadership what was going on because of the hypersensitive nature and stealth posture in the department.”

Elizondo continued, “It’s important that people know that I served directly with Mattis and, in my opinion, he’s absolutely one of our greatest American treasures and assets. I was with him in Kandahar and I saw him literally save people’s lives. My experience with General Mattis is that he’s a man. Secretary Mattis is a man who wants more information, not less, and to not tell the emperor he has no clothes on, I think, it is a dereliction of duty.

“So my frustration was the resistance by senior leadership not wanting to inform the boss what we were doing because they were afraid it would compromise him in some way politically or worse. They were embarrassed because we didn’t have a solution. Keep in mind that the Department of Defense is an organization that likes to have solutions.

“So when you go to the boss and you tell him, ‘There’s this problem that we don’t know what it is. We don’t know how it works and, even worse, there’s not a damned thing we can do about it,’ that’s not a good position to be in if you are in the military, as you can imagine. As a member of the Secretary of Defense staff, the last thing you want to tell the boss is that we have a problem that we don’t have a solution for.”

In a post-interview follow-up question I asked Elizondo if President Obama’s Defense secretaries, Robert M. Gates, Leon Panetta, Chuck Hagel and Ash Carter, were ever briefed on the existence and nature of the Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program. I received no answer to my question.

In our system of government we constitutionally have the doctrine of civilian control of the military. Article II of the Constitution clearly establishes that the president is the commander-in-chief. Strategic decision-making is constitutionally in the hands of the civilian political leadership, rather than professional military officers.

So this is the frustration expressed by Elizondo, the inability to tell senior leadership what was going on. This suggests that his former Pentagon higher-level management is in clear violation of the Constitution: by not briefing the duly appointed civilian authority, in this case, the Secretary of Defense. Congress has the responsibility to hold hearings and get to the bottom of it all.

I suspect that the memo probably got lost in the congressional mailroom.

If you have a UFO sighting to report, use one of the two national database services: [NUFORC.org](http://NUFORC.org) or [MUFON.com](http://MUFON.com). Both services respect confidentiality.

Cheryl Costa is the 2018 recipient of the International UFO Congress, “Researcher of the Year” award.

Breakhead: On The Road

Cheryl’s future speaking engagements include:

May 19: Pine Bush UFO Farm, Pine Bush, N.Y.

June 3, 2 to 4 p.m.: DeWitt Community Library Central Library, 5110 Jamesville Road, DeWitt 13078

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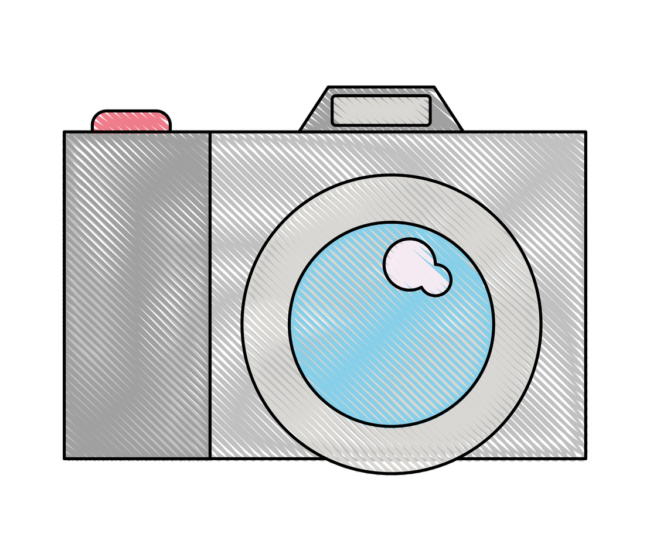
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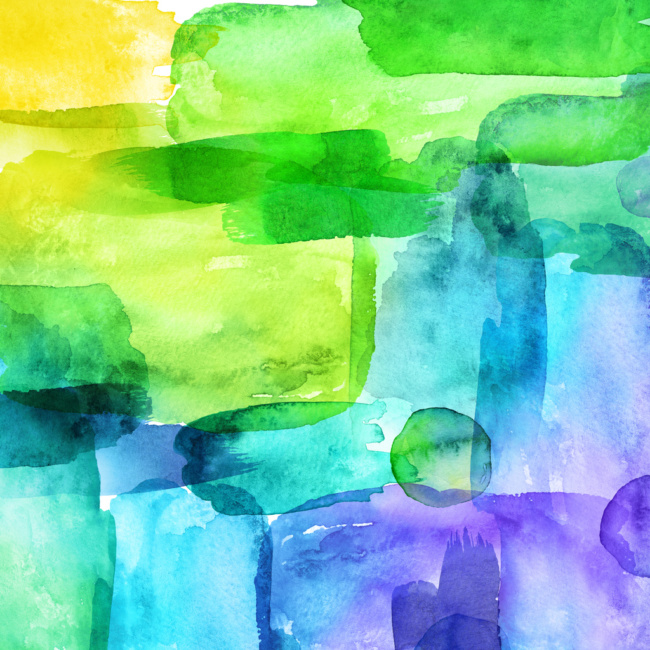
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