



Reuters Photo: An undated file photo showing a possible UFO sighting as reported by the Journal of...

Tue Dec 18, 5:47 AM ET

TOKYO (Reuters) - Yes, UFOs do exist, Japan's top government spokesman said on Tuesday.

The comment by chief cabinet secretary Nobutaka Machimura drew laughter from reporters at his regular briefing on government policy.

ADVERTISEMENT

Earlier the cabinet, responding to an opposition lawmaker's question, issued a statement saying it could not confirm any cases of unidentified flying objects.

"This is an issue that the nation is interested in -- it is a defence issue and a confirmation operation needs to take place," Ryuji Yamane, a lawmaker from the main opposition Democratic Party who submitted the question to the cabinet, told Reuters.

"But the government does not even try to collect information necessary for the confirmation."

Machimura, asked about the government's view on UFOs at a regular press conference, told reporters that the government can only offer a stereotyped response.

"Personally, I definitely believe they exist," he said, apparently tongue in cheek.

But the prime minister stuck to the official view.

"I have yet to confirm (that UFOs exist)," Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda told reporters later in the day.

(Reporting by Yoko Kubota and George Nishiyama, Editing by Michael Watson)