

UFO INVESTIGATOR

NATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE ON
AERIAL PHENOMENA
NICAP

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UFOS FORCE GOVERNMENT ACTION

In the November 1976 issue of the *UFO Investigator* the American public was first alerted of the intrusion of a UFO into the air space over Tehran, Iran. In August 1977 the U.S. government declassified the case report of the incident, but only the *UFO Investigator* carried the message to the public. It would seem that the country's news media (and the government?) would rather publish weak, sensational UFO cases than to publize an unexplainable report of a UFO.

At 12:30 a.m. in Tehran (Greenwich Mean Time plus 4½) on September 19, 1976, the Imperial Iranian Air Force command Post received the first of many phone calls to come from Tehranian citizens reporting a strange object in the sky. The assistant deputy commander of operations ordered an F-4 jet fighter scrambled at 11:30 a.m. to investigate. After the first F-4 lost all radio communications upon approaching within 25 nautical miles of the UFO, it returned to base and a second F-4 was scrambled. The second jet fighter also lost radio communication, and the ability to fire a missile at an object that was emitted from the UFO and racing toward the speeding jet. After taking dramatic action to escape, the pilot of the F-4 regained use of his weapons panel and communication. He continued to chase at supersonic speeds until the UFO emitted another object which dove for the ground far below. The F-4 crew decided to circle the descending object because they anticipated a massive explosion when it impacted on the soil of Iran. The object did not explode. Instead it hovered and illuminated an area of about 2-3 kilometers diameter before fading from sight. Meanwhile, the original

UFO sped off into the night skies leaving behind more questions than answers.

No one knows where the Tehran UFO came from before its encounter with the Royal Iranian Air Force. However, NICAP may know where it went after it appeared over Tehran.

Between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 1:30 a.m. (Greenwich Mean Time plus 1) 4200 miles from Tehran, reports of a UFO were flooding Morocco's Royal Gendarmerie Headquarters. Three hours after a UFO was chased by the Royal Iranian Air Force. Morocco officials were dealing with reports of a similar object. Calls to the Royal Gendarmerie came in from Casablanca, Rabat, the Marrakech area, Kenitra and other cities in Morocco. The reports described a silver colored luminous "flattened ball" moving slowly at an attitude of approximately 1000 meters. Some of the reports were of a large luminous tube-shaped object that emitted bright sparks intermittently from the rear of the craft. All of the reports were in agreement that the UFO was moving without producing a sound.

One of the most detailed reports received on the Morocco UFO was given by an officer in the Royal Gendarmerie. He was returning to the city of Rabat from the city of Kenitra at about 1:15 a.m. when he saw what first appeared to be an aircraft's landing lights as seen on an approach to land. He soon realized that the object he was viewing was not an aircraft, but a self luminous disk-shaped object. The UFO was moving slowly parallel to the coast coming from the southwest toward the northeast. As the object came closer the officer could see that the UFO was more tubular shaped

than disk shaped. He watched the object until it disappeared from view in the northeastern sky. A number of witnesses including the officer submitted drawings of the UFO along with their reports to Morocco authorities.

Although it can not be proven it would seem reasonable to believe that the UFO seen by the F-4 pilot leaving Iran at a high rate of speed at about 1:30 a.m. Iranian time, arrived over the country of Morocco at 1:00 a.m. local time. since there is a 3½ hour difference in time zones between the two countries we would assume that the UFO traveled over the 4300 mile distance at a speed of about 1400-1500 miles per hour. According to Iranian Royal Air Force observers this was the approximate speed of the UFO as it left the area.

Whether or not both incidents were caused by the same craft it is interesting to note that officials in both countries reacted much differently than our officials do when a UFO is spotted. In Iran the reaction to the UFO was a normal one, i.e., "Scramble the jets and try to determine what is invading our air space." In Morocco the response was also a normal one, i.e., officials gathered data and made every effort to identify the craft. The Royal Gendarmerie was instructed by King Hassan to make every effort to find out what was flying over the country he leads.

It would be a normal procedure for the country of Morocco to contact one of the world powers for an answer. Since the United States should have answers after studying UFO's for more than 20 years, one would think that a message responding to a Moroccan request for information would be very informative.

Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, stated in his response that, "It is difficult to offer any definitive explanation as to the cause or origin of the UFO sighted in the Moroccan area between 0100 and 0130 local time 19 September 1976." But, as is usual for United States officials, he did try to offer an explanation. He referred to the Condon study. He stated that the U.S. government was unaware of any aircraft or satellite activity in the area, but that would not preclude the possibility of aircraft flights or unusual atmospheric conditions as a cause. He stated that the United States government was not studying the subject of UFOs since, "Where sufficiently detailed and reliable data are available, sightings can be attributed to natural causes and that further study is not indicated."

Editor Note: We wonder what King Hassan now thinks about the reliability of his Royal Gendarmerie.

Kissinger kept on trying with a discussion of meteor showers, but had to state that, "Meteors are usually visible at an altitude of around 100 km, not 1 km. However, subjective estimates of the height of such sightings are usually too low."

Editor Note: And too slow and too large??

Mr. Kissinger closed his message with this statement of wisdom, "In order to analyze the Moroccan event thoroughly, further descriptions or photographs from the local area would be needed. In the meantime, one would tend to believe that the event was a meteor, and probably a spectacular one or an account of the description of slow velocity, no noise, and burning fragments, a decaying satellite part, of which there is no precise re-entry record." *Kissinger*

NICAP can only hope that our government deals with other countries in non-UFO related areas with more candor and informative data than they do when commenting on UFOs.



SENSATIONAL REPORTING AGAIN AND AGAIN

Washington, D.C. television and radio stations broadcasted a misleading report on September 22, 1977 which caused some concern to the listening audience. The media stated that an unidentified craft, possibly a UFO, was travelling around the District of Columbia discharging a potent gas and injuring several people. More emphasis was put on the UFO aspect than there should have been.

NICAP spoke with the D.C. police night inspector on September 23, 1977 and was told that a helicopter was sighted in the 700 block of Shepard Street, N.W. at approximately 8:00 p.m. the prior evening. Officer Hart was dispatched to the area to investigate, and he reported that he could smell a gaseous odor but did not observe any craft in the area. However, numerous witnesses had reported seeing a helicopter. At 9:00 p.m. the same evening, Officer Bryant, Communications Director, checked with the local airports and was informed that the police traffic copters had landed at 7:30 p.m. and 7:36 p.m. The President's helicopters were not flying at that time. National Airport was not aware of any official helicopters flying in the area at the time of the sighting.

The gaseous substance was considered to be tear gas, but no one seems to know who was discharging the gas on September 22, 1977. Sensational media reporting of this type is what weakens ufology research and beliefs.



MEMOS
FOR
MEMBERS

Be watching for additional information on a new film to be released in the near future entitled, "THE FORCE BEYOND." Ernest Jahn, a NICAP Regional Investigator appears in the film.

Celestial Visitors: UFOs and Space Travel

by
Margaret Sachs and Ernest Jahn

Reviewed by Bruce Maccabee

This book is an interesting synthesis of factual data and commentary on our space program with data and commentary on what may be "someone else's" space program. The book divides into roughly three major sections, each of which consists of one or more chapters. In the first section (Parts 1 and 2) the authors present a collection of terrestrial mysteries and subjects of research to convince the reader that "we don't know everything." Some of these mysteries are classical "Fortean" topics such as ancient civilizations, ESP, unusual things falling from the sky, the nature of the Tunguska "meteor", the origin of tektites, and the great meteor procession of 1913. The authors also present some recent results from our space program and speculations about interstellar travel and communication in the first section.

The second section (Parts 3, 4, and 5) is devoted to ufology, which is the study of UFO reports and related matters. The authors present a short description of how NICAP investigates UFO cases and then they launch into a series of about twenty intriguing UFO reports, some of which have never been published in book form before. Following the UFO reports they give their impressions of the involvement of the Air Force, Congress, and the Colorado University investigation with the UFO situation. They also give their impressions of the present status of UFO research in regard to scientific acceptability and point out that some law enforcement agencies are now actively involved in UFO investigations.

The final section is a "plug" for space research. In it they describe spinoff benefits of the space program, many of which have already been realized and some others expected in the future. They also summarize the rather detailed plans of some "space-buff" groups that wish to start colonies in space stations orbiting the earth.

One unique feature of the book is the selection of quotations from famous personalities associated with UFO research and with the space program. Some of the interesting "quotees" are Astronauts Mitchell and McDivitt, Al Chop (formerly of Project Bluebook), and Les Gaver (of NASA). Another feature is the statement by Police Chief W.J. Skower of Enfield, Conn. who has published an order for the officers in his jurisdiction aid in UFO investigations if possible, to preserve evidence if there is any, and, above all, to treat reports seriously.

Several specific statements and incidents recounted in the book deserve special comment. One such incident concerns a "strange rock" that fell out of the sky and hit a New York farmer's tractor. This incident was initially reported by NICAP in early 1975. The rock was especially unusual because, according to the farmer, it was hot enough when it landed to melt through ice and snow. The rock was studied by several laboratories (and I studied a portion of it myself). The authors point out that the material in the center of the rock was found to be a rather impure sort of cast iron that had apparently undergone thermal shock. No source for the rock was apparent. However, there was no clear evidence that it had come from outer space. Therefore it was ultimately passed off as "anomalous" with just the slightest hint by the people who studied the rock (but not by those who had actually talked with the farmer) that it might be a hoax or that the farmer had simply picked up a "strange rock." For me the present status of this case is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of the rock's identification because of other peculiarities not mentioned by the authors. Its inner core was covered by a well adhered layer of light reddish brown lead sulfide, and the percentage of sodium was unusually high for iron alloys. I looked through several books on metallurgy and found no composition that was even close to the composition of the rock in terms of lead and sodium. Thus I believe this case must be left open for speculation even though there is no hint of this being a classic UFO report (the farmer reported seeing nothing in the sky just after the rock hit his tractor).

Another interesting incident is the 1913 meteor "procession" in which many meteors were seen over central Canada,

near Bermuda, and near Brazil. The authors point out that the duration of the procession as seen by observers in Canada was a little over three minutes. However, I would like to point out that any individual meteor was seen less than 45 seconds (and typically around 20-30 seconds). "Normal" meteors are seen for several seconds, so these were indeed unusual, but there is no reason to think that they could not have been meteors. Calculations based on meteor speeds, the speed of the earth, and the altitudes at which meteors become bright enough to be seen suggest that under extremely opportune circumstances a meteor might be seen for as long as 150-200 seconds. However, such long durations would require that the meteor glow brightly at altitudes around 80-100 km above the earth, and that the meteor be virtually in a circular orbit around the earth. Moreover, visibilities of this duration would only be possible if the observer could see the meteor from horizon to horizon (i.e., 180° arc of the sky). This information about maximum durations of meteors is of interest in considering the "Coyne" case, which is described below.

Unfortunately the authors perpetuated an erroneous date that, I believe, first appeared in *The UFO Evidence*, a NICAP publication of 1964. The date is that of the famous Rouen, France UFO photo of an object that apparently closely resembled the object photographed in 1950 by Mr. and Mrs. Trent in McMinnville, Oregon. The date should be March 5, 1957 according to the publications in which the photo first appeared (*Flying Saucer Review*, May-June 1954, and *Royal Aircraft Flying Review*, June 1957).

Referring now to the "Coyne helicopter case" of October 1973, the authors recount the experience of Captain Coyne and his crew who were flying their helicopter towards Cleveland, Ohio at 10:30 PM on Oct. 18. They observed a bright object which apparently approached them, rapidly enough for Coyne to take an evasive maneuver. Coyne put the helicopter into a dive but the light apparently followed them and then appeared to hover over them. As the authors point out, Phil Klass has suggested that the helicopter crew misidentified an unusually bright fireball (a large meteor) which was actually at an altitude of many tens of kilometers above

them. However, recent data published by J. Ziedmann of the Center for UFO Studies (see *UFO Report* magazine, October, 1977) suggests that the crew may have had the "meteor" in view for as long as 300-330 seconds. If this is true the object does not fit into the meteor theory which yields an "absolute upper bound" of about 200 seconds duration, as mentioned previously. Other information that has become available since Klass's book was published, and which is alluded to by these authors, suggests that the helicopter crew could see a structure to the object and a definite angular size that blotted out the sky background. Thus this case must not yet be considered to be explained as a normal phenomenon.

The sighting of an object in space by the Gemini 11 astronauts is referred to in the book, with a short summary of my previous analysis which showed that if the object was at the distance given by NORAD (about 250 miles), the images in the photographs were far too large and bright. As readers of the *UFO Investigator* of August 1977 know, the object, which was identified as the Russian satellite, Proton III, was actually more like 4000 miles from the Gemini II astronauts when the photos were taken. At this distance the curvature of the earth requires that they would have to have been able to see through the earth in order to see the Proton III. And they weren't even looking in the correct direction!

I found the book to be well written and quite informative. Although the authors claim that UFOs do exist, they leave open the question of what they may be (spacecraft is, of course, suggested). To their credit they keep speculations about UFOs to a minimum, while presenting many scientifically orthodox speculations about the nature of the universe, extraterrestrial life, and the future of our own space program.

While reading the last chapter, on space colonies, I was reminded of two newspaper articles that appeared in August, 1975. Each article by itself was not amusing, but the contrast between the subjects of the articles, and their near coincidence in time, was amusing. On August 11 of that year the *Washington Star* reported "Scientists See UFOs Too Costly." The article summarized some views of scientists who feel that it would be much cheaper to establish contact by

radio. Two weeks later the *Washington Post* reported "Space City Envisioned" with the subtitle "10,000 Earthlings in \$100 Billion Satellite." The article described a space station similar to the one discussed in this book. I submit that if 100 billion dollars is not too expensive for us (about 1/3 of the USA national budget), even greater expenditures might not be "too costly" for "others."

TEXAS POLICE SPOT UFO

The small town of Porter, Texas, which is located approximately 13 miles from Houston, was the site of frequent UFO activity beginning on July 21, 1977 in the early morning hour of 4:15 A.M. Officer John W. Bruner, a deputy sheriff, was on duty and was the first person to observe the phenomenon. Officer Bruner and his partner Officer Coogler were parked west of the object which appeared to be approximately 1/2 to 1 mile away (see figure 1).

The weather condition was broken clouds with stars visible. The object was

much brighter than any of the visible stars.

When the officers first noticed the object they were somewhat apprehensive. Bruner and Coogler got out of their vehicle and tried to observe the object better by shinning their search light on it. The object moved toward the men and the officers turned off the light because they became nervous at seeing the object's response to their light. The object then moved back to its first location. The light source from the object appeared to be a bright pulsating white light. Officer Bruner stated that he used his bifocals to try to observe more detail on the object. The two officers concurred that the object appeared to have six portholes (see figure 2) surrounding a type of frame work. Officer Bruner stated that at 5:00 A.M. he saw a meteor pass behind the object moving from north to south. At about the same time, a jet aircraft moved in to the same area approaching the object and then veered off toward the east. Officer Bruner stated that he felt the airliner was not a commercial jet but was a military craft. NICAP's investigator contacted Ellington Air Force Base and the base spokesman said that no military planes were flying in the vicinity of Porter.

Meanwhile, Kenneth Dean Biggs, a restaurant manager, at a nearby location

observed the same object. He further stated that the lights in his restaurant went dim and the radio reception was nothing but static, "Just a lot of scrambled noise."

The officers radioed their dispatch office to have a police helicopter sent to observe the object. The helicopter and reporters converged on the area but the time they arrived, the UFO had disappeared from view by either the lights going off or by moving behind the cloud cover.

The two officers observed the UFO for approximately 45 minutes. During that time period, the UFO appeared to stand still in mid air, pulsated, travelled at incredible speeds and flew with erratic mobility. The officers described the UFO's apparent size to be about that of a grapefruit. Officer Bruner is convinced that the object he saw was not a balloon or a helicopter. However, officials at Ellington Air Force Base, William P. Hobby Airport, Houston Intercontinental Airport and the National Weather Service stated that nothing appeared on their radar screen.

From July 22 through the 24th witnesses observed an object which by their descriptions, was the same object that the officers had seen. From July 25 to the 28th there were no additional reports filed, but the weather was inclement and there was very poor visibility. Therefore, the possibility exists that the UFO remained in the area but no one could see it.

On July 29, 1977, a report was received from a woman who claimed that she saw the same object at 4:30 A.M. just three miles south of Porter. Her 10 year old son also observed the object with her from his bedroom window. The UFO appeared to be only 200 yards from their position.

Prior to their observation, between 2:22 A.M. to 3:25 A.M. two army guard helicopters were scrambled to intercept the UFO. Unfortunately, the copters could not identify or locate the object due to a heavy cloud cover. Investigation is continuing by NICAP's regional investigator, Clayton Bergman.

