

UFO INVESTIGATOR

NATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE ON
AERIAL PHENOMENA
NICAP

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AN UPDATE ON THE GEMINI II SIGHTING OF AN OBJECT FROM ORBIT

by

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In the August 1975 issue of the *Investigator* I published a paper in which I argued that the photographs taken by astronauts Gordon and Conrad on Sept. 13, 1966 during their eighteenth revolution (this was incorrectly called the sixteenth in the 1975 article) could not have been photographs of a Russian satellite called Proton 3. The reasons given were a) the two satellites were too far apart, b) the astronauts were facing away from the direction to the P-3, and c) the astronauts reported that what they saw would have been traveling in a roughly North-to-South direction, whereas the P-3 was traveling in a roughly South to North direction. Reason (a) was based on the claim by NORAD, which was later reiterated by Dr. Roach in the Condon Report, that the P-3 and GT-11 (Gemini 11) satellites were about 450 km or 280 miles apart when the photos were taken.

At such a great distance, the various portions of the P-3 could not have produced the spacings of the blobs in the photos. (See photos on this page.) Conversely, the spacings of the blobs in the photos corresponded to spacings of about 3 to 4 km if the light sources were 450 km away. Reasons (b) and (c) came

from an article by Lloyd Mallan in Science and Mechanics. However, these reasons are superfluous if the distance estimate is correct.

Since the publication of my paper a controversy has arisen over the separation of the two satellites. One investigator (Jim Oberg) has published several articles in different UFO and space-related magazines in which he has claimed that even a cursory analysis of the orbital data of the P-3 is sufficient to show that it was *running ahead* of schedule and thus might have passed in front of, instead of behind, the GT-11.

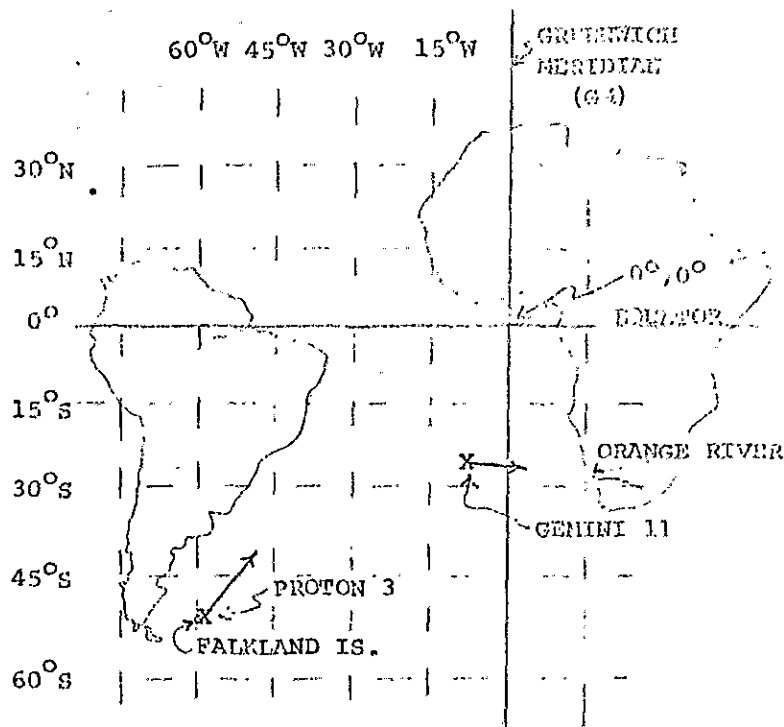
My own analysis of data which has only recently become available, thanks to the efforts of Jim Oberg, Brad Sparks, and myself, shows that (a) rather than traveling ahead of schedule, at the time of the photos the P-3 was actually *behind* schedule, (b) the two spacecraft were not separated by 450 km, but rather by more than *ten times* that distance (refer to the map), and the orientation of the spacecraft was as remembered by the astronauts: facing forward in orbit, heads up. The information related to (c) above was taken directly from a NASA tracking record (computer printout). The information related to (a) above was obtained from analysis of several NORAD bulletins which list orbital elements and predicted positions of the P-3. The information related to (b) above was obtained from the NORAD bulletins, from the NASA printout, from a TRW reconstruction of the GT-11 trajectory, and from a photo analysis paper by Richard Underwood who gave the time of the photos (27 hours, 43 minutes Ground Elapsed Time, which corresponded to 18 hours, 25 minutes Greenwich Mean Time). All of the available information was used in a set of

calculations to determine the "exact" locations of the two satellites. Since the photo time may be off by several minutes, the positions of the satellites at the time of the photos may be off by several minutes times their orbital velocities (about 290 miles/minute). However, since the GT-11 was moving *away* from the orbit of the P-3 (see the map on page 2), the satellites were never closer than a thousand miles during the time frame allowed for the pictures (roughly 18:25 GMT to 18:30 GMT). For those who wish to locate the exact (to within one or two degrees) positions on a globe or a flat map (be careful of flat maps; the distance scale changes with position on the map), the calculated coordinates are (at 18:25 Z on Sept. 13, 1966): Proton 3 - 52° South Latitude by 59° West Longitude; Gemini 11 - 25° South Latitude by 8° West Longitude (South Latitude measured South of the Equator; West Longitude measured West of the Greenwich Meridian).

Thus it appears that the Gemini 11 astronauts either saw a satellite so secret that NORAD didn't know about it or didn't want anyone else to know about it, or else they saw a!

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MAP SHOWING THE RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE GEMINI 11 AND THE PROTON 3 SATELLITES WHEN THE PHOTOS WERE TAKEN (SEPT 13, 1966; 18:25 GMT)



THE ARROWS ATTACHED TO THE X'S WHICH DEPICT THE LOCATIONS OF THE SATELLITES INDICATE THE APPROXIMATE DIRECTIONS OF MOTION WITH RESPECT TO THE FLAT MAP COORDINATES (A MILLER CYLINDRICAL PROJECTION; DO NOT ATTEMPT A LINEAR DISTANCE MEASUREMENT FROM THIS MAP.)

WARNING: CE III POSES POTENTIAL CONTAMINATION

Dr. Richard F. Haines, a research scientist and consultant, submitted the following informative article on the soon-to-be released film, CE-III. Dr. Haines' warning as to the effects of this movie are justified and NICAP feels that all its members should be aware of the film's potential influence on the UFO field.

As you may know, I have been actively involved with the collection and analysis of UFO eye witness reports for some time from the standpoint of the perceptual and psychological responses evoked by these strange and sometimes

subjectively threatening stimuli. Of central concern to me has been the development of techniques to help make eye witness reports as reliable and faithfully representative of the original sensory event as possible. My reason for writing you now is out of a great concern for a coming event that may possibly "contaminate" our efforts to obtain as unbiased sighting data as possible.

By now you are probably aware of the planned public release of a movie entitled "Close Encounters of the Third Type" (CE-III) sometime around Christmas of 1977. Our mutual concern for obtaining as objective data as possible should, then, motivate us all to work together to be

prepared for the possible influence of this movie upon the American public and their (later) reporting of CE-III (perhaps similar types of experiences as well). Our actions now will lead to greater understanding of the influence of this mass media presentation upon our data. Outlined below are some suggestions on how we should deal with this potentially *biasing* media event. I hope that once you have thought out the various consequences of not taking any particular action now you will see the merit in these suggestions.

Action 1. You (and your UFO organization) should take action to contact the *manager(s)* of all those local theaters who plan to show this movie in your area. Try to obtain an agreement that you will be given the approximate attendance figures and starting and final showing dates for each theater and each showing of this movie. These data may then be correlated (later as necessary) with the frequency of CE-III type reports in your area.

Action 2. You and your members should see this movie to become as familiar with its details as possible. Such intimate familiarity will make your subsequent eye witness interviews more sensitively aware of similarities and differences between a reported CE-III encounter and the movie. Perhaps you may want to obtain a copy of the script from its producer for your files.

Action 3. You should plan to issue an alert to your membership as soon as possible (at least by mid-October, 1977) pointing out this coming event and how it could affect their investigations. In this regard, I would urge you to ask them to ask, "What can you think of that is anything like the close encounter you have just had?" Under no circumstances should the investigator mention the name of this movie or its contents until the interview is almost over. Always let the eye witness raise the issue. *Only at the end of the interview* would the question be asked, "Have you ever seen the movie 'Close Encounters of the Third Type'?" The reasons for these procedures should be self evident.

I hope that my few suggestions will be of help to you and will also benefit all of us who strive to obtain truly useful data on UFO's.

WITNESSES SIGHT MOON SHAPED OBJECT

The three sighting reports that follow are interesting because of the similarity of the witnesses' descriptions. Each report involves a very large, glowing-orange sphere that hovers and then zooms off or just disappears. The details of these reports parallel those of the July issue's cover story. In fact, the two New Jersey sightings discussed below were investigated by Ernest Jahn, who learned about these reports while collecting data on the July issue's Allocco-Hendrick's sighting.

Vienna, Virginia Report

At 9:45 P.M. on May 20, 1977, Doris Cunningham and her son Michael pulled into the parking lot of their Vienna, Virginia apartment complex. (see sighting advisory, May 1977) Hovering near the swimming pool directly in front of them was a huge, spherical object that was revolving like a top. Michael noticed the sharply outlined object first and he immediately motioned for his mother to look at it. They observed the large sphere through the windshield of the car for approximately one and a half minutes. According to their report, the dome-shaped top of the object was a glowing orange color that was brighter than the background of the clear night sky. The object appeared to be hovering at about the roof top height of their twelve story apartment building.

As the witnesses got out of the car to go into the building, the object suddenly sped off at a speed comparable to that of a jet aircraft. Neither of the witnesses heard any sound coming from the object. No conventional aircraft were flying in the area at the time of the sighting and National Airport does not report anything unusual in their radar log for that date in the Vienna area.

Morristown, New Jersey Report

Mercedes Blass and her niece, Georgian Peebles were driving in Mrs. Peebles' car at approximately 9:00 P.M. in April, 1977. As the car rounded a bend on Morris Street, the two women saw what appeared to be an oversized harvest moon directly in front of the car. To Mrs. Peebles, the object appeared to be yellow, but to Mrs. Blass, it appeared to be orange-red.

The length of the witnesses' observation was approximately two minutes. During this time the two women noticed that the object was self luminous like a bright star and sharply outlined. No sound was emitted from the sphere. After the two minutes, the moon-shape moved from the front of the car to the side of the car and then it disappeared.

Mercedes described the object in the following way.

I felt it was a huge full moon although it was three times the size of a full moon.

Also, it was the most brilliant orange-red color. I was terribly frightened because I felt something very strange had happened to the moon because of the huge size and unusual color.

After the object vanished, both of the witnesses saw the "real" moon in the southeast quadrant of the clear night sky. Neither of the women has ever seen an unidentified object in the sky before.

The two witnesses also noted that the object was very large and solid. Its intensity was at least five times that of the moon. Although the object seemed to be many miles away, the witnesses described it as looking larger than any conventional aircraft.



MEMOS
FOR
MEMBERS

At this time each year, many members are considering tax planning for their 1977 income. May we suggest that you consider a tax-deductible donation to NICAP as part of your planning. Any amount is helpful and will enable NICAP to start research projects which would otherwise remain undone due to lack of funds.

THE SOUTH ATLANTIC SIGHTING OF THE S.S. BALTIC

NICAP has received a second sighting report through the courtesy of Mr. Dave Squires of the Scientific Event Alert Network (SEAN) of the Smithsonian Institution. With the help of the Defense Mapping Agency, NICAP has begun to investigate the reports of those involved in the sighting. The event occurred on November 19, 1976 at approximately 1910 GMT. The witnesses comprise the crew of the S.S. Baltic, a German registered tug.

According to the report, the tug's position was 30.14 N, 23.38 W, when the crew members observed a very bright light five degrees to the right of and at the same altitude as Venus. The light was

as large as Venus, but it was much brighter. It also had a comet-like tail. Both the light and its tail were sharply defined against the sky as they moved in a northerly direction, paralleling the horizon.

After travelling approximately eighteen degrees, the tail began rotating and growing in size. As the diameter of the tail increased to about 59 degrees, the light lessened in intensity. However, the light in front of the tail was still brilliant and the effect of the enlarged tail light and the bright core light was to brighten the entire sky just as a full moon would. The light illuminated both the ship and the sea.

After 26 minutes, the bright center of the light disappeared, and an intensely bright turquoise haze remained. This turquoise light also expanded in all directions, losing sharpness and intensity as it grew.

After 45 minutes, the cloud disbursed entirely and it could no longer be seen by the crew members. The tug later intercepted a British vessel, the Esso America, which reported a tremendous explosion at bearing 286 degrees from its position at 39.40 N, 15.04 W.

NICAP has sent letters to various authorities in the Ascension Islands to try to identify the descriptions used in this report.

EARTH BASED UFOs

The following commentary was written for the *Investigator* by Dr. Robert Creegan, a member of the Philosophy Department at State University of New York at Albany.

It is the consensus of astro-physicists that intergalactic travel would present almost insurmountable obstacles even to a community having many times the intellectual and energy resources of earthlings. As a matter of fact, all but the shortest inter-stellar flights (involving a few light years) are deemed almost inconceivable. On the other hand, if the philosopher Nietzsche was correct, virtually all forms of organized energy have a tendency to expand their spheres of influence. Thus it might be speculated that intelligent centers would gradually bridge the gaps, perhaps by establishing colonies at ever greater distances from their points of origin. Even beyond colonial areas should be found temporary bases of an exploratory character. If the onset of the dread atomic age on earth attracted concerned visitors, it may be that the proximate source need not be beyond near star systems, or even outside the solar system.

If even one out of a few hundred UFO reports actually indicates the existence in the air space of alien artificial objects, then indeed there could be relatively close ports of entry, and after decades of the current UFO period, earth-based centers of exploration are by no means beyond the pale of rational speculation. Once the task of understanding earth were established as a policy, operational bases on earth might seem to be a logical option for the aliens. The idea that such

could not exist undetected for years or decades is assumed by most scientists, but that may indicate only that even some of those capable of abstruse mathematical thought remain most uninformed about elementary geography.

Modern methods of radar and infra-red assisted mapping only reveal the general topography and some thermal characteristics of areas. There exist many regions of thousands of square miles magnitude that have never been more closely surveyed. And as for periodic re-checks, there exist vast areas within a day's trip from some of the largest metropolitan centers that are not re-entered once in five or ten years by parties having any observational skills. Aircraft which disappear without trace for several years (and within the continents, rather than merely over the sea) have in some cases done so that close to major centers, and one need not assume anything more mysterious than just the natural difficulties of access, or even of aerial observation in wooded areas.

If we dare assume some will to concealment, and some skill in camouflage, it is not irrational to accept the possibility that whole fleets of artificial objects could be parked within a stone's throw (so to speak) of major arteries of travel. In Argentina it has been frequently proposed that the source of occasionally numerous UFOs is from the Salta region, an Andean wilderness area. Frank Salisbury of Utah State University has postulated bases in the region of Utah south of the Uinta Mountains. UFOs have been reported from Canadian lakes, that is, as resting for a time on the

surfaces. The state of Minnesota claims to have ten thousand lakes. Canada has many times that number, including quite a few un-named ones, as far as official geography is concerned. One has reason to suspect that some strictly human mumbo-jumbo of a war-like character was the cause, but the point is that camouflage is a never to be forgotten possibility in considering what may be found on earth, even relatively near to heavily settled areas. To doubt this type of possibility is to be abysmally ignorant of elementary facts of geography and of the statistical limitations of human locomotion on this earth. We simply do not closely inspect vast areas in ways holding much likelihood of penetrating the most rudimentary camouflage.

Much more dramatic are speculations concerning alien mimicry of human artifacts, such as houses, aircraft and automobiles. That is another story, beyond the scope of this brief statement, but it may be said that on the highways in some parts of the North American continent one may be passed by vehicles with velocity suggestive of something more than the well known heaviness of foot of our speed demons. Add unusual light patterns and intensity of general luminescence, and speculation is difficult to interdict. All this article seriously claims is that if UFOs are both artificial and alien, this does not imply that they need keep crossing outer space. Some of them could be posted much closer home. The huge number of fairly strong reports in the last few decades might perhaps be best explained in such terms.

SIGHTING ADVISORY

Preliminary information on new reports. Details and evaluations will be published when available.

July 21 - 24, 1977 -- Porter, Texas—Clayton Bergman, NICAP's Houston based investigator, reports that on July 21, 22, 23, and 24, several of the Montgomery County, Texas Sheriff's Deputies saw an erratically moving white light in the early morning sky. Deputy John Bruner and partner, Reserve Deputy John Coogler, watched the light for 48 minutes, from 0415 A.M. to 0508 A.M. EST. on July 21 while they made their early morning patrol of Porter, Texas.