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COUNTRY
PANAMA

REPORT NO.
IR-4-58

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AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

1170311

SUBJECT
Unidentified Flying Object Report

AREA REPORTED ON
PANAMA

FROM (Agency)
Director of Intelligence - CAIRC

DATE OF REPORT
18 March 1958

DATE OF INFORMATION
9-10 March 1958

EVALUATION
B-1

PREPARED BY (OFFICER)
Vernon D. Adams, Capt., USAF

SOURCE
Caribbean Command AOC

REFERENCES (Number, name, date, previous report, etc., as applicable)
APR 200-2

SUMMARY: (Enter concise summary of report. Give significance in final one-sentence paragraph. List inclusions at lower left. Begin text of report on AF Form 118-Part II.)

A number of unidentified radar tracks were observed 9-10 March 1958 by search and tracking radar located in the Canal Zone. Two tracks were investigated by aircraft with negative results.

Vernon D. Adams
VERNON D. ADAMS
Capt., USAF
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APPROVED BY:

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pages 3-5 are
1

Doc-3
Doc-1
Doc-04/9H

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RETURN TO DOC-55

- 4 INCL
- 1 WAC #769 (Uncl)
- 2 C-2 USARCARIB Report (Conf) *S. 2 pages 3-5*
- 3 Log of M & I Section (Uncl) *See pages 6-7*
- 4 Track Reports (Uncl)

DISSEMINATION BY ORIGINATOR

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SUPPLEMENT TO AF FORM 112

ORIGINATING AGENCY

REPORT NO.

GAIRC - Dir. of Intelligence

IR-4-58

PAGE

2

OF

7

PAGES

During the period 9 through 13 March, three unexplainable radar contacts have been made by equipment located in the Canal Zone. On two occasions, aircraft were vectored into the area by the radar sites, with negative results. Interrogation of scope operators has indicated that returns were strong and easily distinguished from cloud formations. Returns were definite when associated with clouds. Generally the tracks were triangular with speed of movement very erratic. Movement appears at times to be evasive action. The incident of 9 - 10 March was tracked by gun laying radar. During period of observation, radar maintenance personnel checked out their system thoroughly. In addition, lock was broken, however, the equipment immediately picked up target and locked on. A second tracking radar situated on Taboga Island, locked on the return. Target generally remained in same area half way between radar sites. Personnel stationed at sites reported seeing red and green lights but no noise was associated with lights. Visibility was good. However, lights were visible for only a short period. A commercial flight volunteered to investigate target. He was vectored within a hundred yards of target and reported negative sighting. Target faded out at 0208R on 10 March.

At 10:12R on 10 March, search radar reported unidentified target west of canal. A T-33 from Howard Field was sent to investigate. Negative results. Aircraft was in the immediate area of target with negative sighting. Contact with target was broken at 14:15R.

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SUPPLEMENT TO AF FORM 112

ORIGINATING AGENCY

AC CF S, G-2 USARCARI8

REPORT NO.

IR-4-58

PAGE

3 - 7

PAGE

In accordance with Department of the Army Intelligence Collection Memorandum #200-72B-1, dated 6 August 1957, subject: "Unconventional Aircraft", the following information is submitted:

1. On 10 March 1958, Capt. Harold E. Stahlman, Operations Officer, 764th Anti-Aircraft Operations Center (AAOC), Fort Clayton Canal Zone, reported information concerning the sighting of an unidentified flying object. At 2003R, 9 March 1958, Stahlman, as Deputy Defense Commander for Anti-Aircraft Defenses, was notified at his home by the Operations Duty Officer, AAOC, that the AAOC had received a radar report of an unidentified aircraft approaching the Pacific side of the Isthmus of Panama. Stahlman arrived at the AAOC at approximately 2008R.

During the radar tracking of the first blip which appeared on the radar screen, two additional blips were observed at 2045R. The first echo was identified as a Chilean Airlines aircraft which landed at Tocumen Airport, Tocumen, Republic of Panama. The two other blips, which were not identified, indicated that the two objects were in the vicinity of Fort Kobbe, Canal Zone. A civilian aircraft in the general vicinity of the objects made a visual search of the area with negative results. The original blips were picked up by Search Radar and then transferred to the Track Radar Unit located at Flamenco Island, Fort Amador, Canal Zone. This unit was able to lock on the unidentified objects and the following information was obtained:

Number of Objects:	Two, approximately one hundred yards apart.
Duration of Radar Observation:	2003R, 9 March 1958, to 0208R, 10 March 1958.
Location of Radar:	Battery D, 764th AAA Bn, Flamenco Island
Location of Object:	LJ 2853. (Geo-Ref, Military Grid Reference System)
Prevailing Weather:	Clear, visibility unlimited; no wind reported.
Direction of Flight:	Average angle of elevation, 365°, Azimuth, 330 mils.
Manner of Flight:	Steady, slight circular path over the vicinity of Fort Kobbe, Canal Zone.
Altitude:	Varied from two to ten thousand feet. Average of seven thousand feet.

An attempt was made by members of the Radar Site, Flamenco Island, to observe the objects by searchlights. When the light touched the objects, they traveled from an altitude of two thousand feet to ten thousand feet in five to ten seconds.

SUPPLEMENT TO AF FORM 112

REPORTING AGENCY

REPORT NO.

PAGE

OF

PAGES

AC OF S. G-2 USARCARI

IR-4-58

4 OF 7

This was such a rapid movement, that the Track Radar, which was locked on target, broke the Track Lock and was unable to keep up with the ascent of the objects. As Track Radar can only be locked on a solid object, which was done in the case of the two unidentified flying objects, it was assumed that the objects were solid. The possibility that the sightings might have been weather balloons was discarded when the Air Force was contacted and stated that no balloons were in the air at that time. (F-3)

2. On 10 March 1958, Capt. Stahlman made another report concerning the sighting of an unidentified flying object by Search radar located on Taboga Island, Republic of Panama. The following information was obtained in regard to the sightings:

Number of Objects:	One.
Duration of Radar Observation:	1012R to 1412R, 10 March 1958.
Location of Radar:	Taboga Island Radar Site.
Location of Object:	KL 1646. (Geo-Ref, Military Grid Reference System)
Prevailing Weather:	Partly cloudy.
Manner of Flight:	From an erratic to a triangular shaped flight pattern.
Altitude:	Undeterminable due to radar system used.
Speed:	Variable; from hovering to approximately one thousand miles per hour.

Track Radar indicated that the object moved away from two United States Air Force jet aircraft that were approaching. At that time the speed of the object was calculated at approximately one thousand miles per hour. The use of Track Radar was terminated at 1412R.

3. On 11 March 1958, Lt. Roy M. Strom, Operations Officer, 784th AAA Bn, Fort Clayton, Canal Zone, reported information received from a Pan-American Airlines Pilot concerning an unidentified flying object. At approximately 0400R, 11 March 1958, the pilot of incoming aircraft C-509, a Pan American Airlines DC-6, observed an unidentified flying object 12 degrees North on Fox Trot route. The object appeared larger than the aircraft and was traveling in a southeasterly direction.

SUPPLEMENT TO AF FORM 112

ORIGINATING AGENCY

REPORT NO.

AC OF S, G-2 USARCARIIB

IR-4-58

PAGE

5 OF 7

PAGES

At the same time Lt. Strom reported that an unidentified flying object was picked up by Hawk Radar. The object was plotted twice at approximately 0508R heading Northwest at LK 3858. On the third plot, at 0517R, the object had moved to LK 5434 in a Southwesterly direction. Eleven minutes elapsed during the confirmation of the three plots. At 0528R, the object was sighted at LK 4303. Incoming aircraft C-509 was in the same area and Hawk Radar was asked if it was the same track that was picked up previously. The answer was negative. The object was last plotted at LJ 3254 at 0536R, still traveling in a Southwesterly direction. Radar contact was lost at that time. The size, shape, or altitude of the object could not be determined by radar. (F-6)

G2 USARCARIIB COMMENT: DAICM #200-72B-1 mentioned above requires that:

"The Headquarters of the nearest Major Air Command should be notified of sightings which come to the attention of Army personnel", referenced DAICM continues, "Air Force Commanders have instructions from the Department of the Air Force which cover reporting on subject (AFR-200-2: "Unidentified Flying Objects Reporting, Short Title: UFOB)" (U)". This office continues to report information as developed.

SUPPLEMENT TO AF FORM 112

ORIGINATING AGENCY

REPORT NO.

PAGE 26 OF 37 PAGES

CAirC, Director of Intel.

-IR-4-58

EXTRACTS FROM THE LOG AT MOVEMENT & IDENTIFICATION SECTION ADCC

09 March

19:59 Unknown aircraft flying Tango Route inbound. No known aircraft in area but one advised by Tocumen, WEZ BLB ATC.

20:45 Unidentified blip believed to be weather balloon picked up between Albrook and Taboga. Appears to be orbiting. No air traffic in area at all. Advised ATC of possibility of object interfering with air traffic.

20:45 Advised that a balloon had been released earlier in the evening at approximately 1830R but should be down south-east of Albrook at present time.

21:40 Tower advised P-501 (Pan American Flight) is cleared by Albrook ATC for DF instructions in order to avoid object. Flight P501 will cross the canal over Albrook.

23:45 Distance of object from D Battery (Flamingo) is 4870 yards, height 3.5 thousand feet. At the present time, a searchlight from harbor entrance control point is being used to aid in identification purposes, to be executed by one AF-Naval crash boat.

23:55 Object now at 6.0 feet moving away very rapidly to the southwest.

24:00 Radar advises that as soon as searchlight was employed, the object became evasive. Object now at 10.0 feet, 7800 yards from site. Two returns, one at 10.0 feet, other at 08.

10 March

00:44 Braniff Flight 400 reports negative sighting of object during brief investigation. Radar reported aircraft was approximately 100 yards from object.

00:55 Radar reports two targets now approximately 100 yards apart. Braniff Flight 400 landed at 0047.

02:10 Radar contact lost.

10:12 Unknown aircraft at KJ1646, speed 290K. No known aircraft in area. Check with Tocumen, Albrook, Howard, ATC & CAA. Blip very practical, has reached speed of 900K then slows to a complete stop for several minutes before moving again.

10:30 Major Davis at Howard Operations advised of UFO. He will go up and take a look.

11:20 AF 5289 (T-33) airborne to check UFO. UFO was observed