

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
ALASKAN REGION
701 C Street, Anchorage, Alaska, 99513

DECEMBER 30, 1986
CONTACT: PAUL STEUCKE, FAA, PUBLIC AFFAIRS, ALASKA
(907) 271-5296

The following information constructed from personal handwritten notes, has been provided to Paul Steucke, FAA Public Affairs Officer, Alaskan Region, by Jim Derry, Manager, FAA Security Division, Alaskan Region, and constitutes the information obtained in personal interviews held the evening of November 17, 1986, at Anchorage International Airport, with the flight crew of Japan Air Lines flight 1628, enroute from Europe and Iceland/ to Tokyo, via Anchorage, Alaska.

Attending the interview were: Jim Derry, Manager, Security Division, FAA; Ron Mickle, Investigator, FAA Security; Jack Wright, Investigator, FAA Flight Standards District Office, the Manager of the JAL Anchorage Office; and the flight crew - Captain Kenjyu Terauchi; First Officer Takonori Tamefuji; and Flight Engineer Yoshio Tsukuda.

The interviews were in response to the sighting of unknown and unidentified air traffic which accompanied the flight from the Alaska Canadian border on the north along a flight plan which flows approximately from Ft. Yukon, Alaska, to Fairbanks, to Anchorage.

NOTES:

- * FLIGHT NUMBER JAL 1628, Dep. Reykjavik, Iceland.
- * ADIZ, HL529...J529... (Airway numbers) Contact at POTAT()
- * Visual contact..can see FAI, over FAI did 360 degrees.
- * S. MJ-125, Route

continued...

Page two, JAL #1628, Notes, FAA, Alaska

- * Used onboard color radar, located aircraft, 7 miles.
 - * Size: "As big as B747 or larger, erratic movement."
 - * Lights: Yellow, Amber, Green, No red. Rotating Beacon. Many small lights.
 - * One object, two sets of lights.
 - * Speed of JAL B747: .84 Mach, (Approximately 525 knots)
 - * ATC (Air Traffic Control) picked up target.
 - * Target broke off ---40 N of TKA (Talkeetna)
 - * Radio: Received static only in VHF mode. (Abnormal)
 - * JAL aircraft on instrument navigation.
 - * Flight Crew observation: Normal, professional, rational, no drug or alcohol involvement.
 - * Drawings of situation provided by Captain.
 - * Normal language difficulty between flight crew and interviewer.
- ** Note: Exact conversion to mph or knts is difficult as it varies due to elevation (air density), weather, wind, etc.)

END.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "F. V. Stuck", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

News:

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FOR RELEASE ON
MARCH 5, 1987
#87-09

CONTACT: PAUL STEUCKE

FAA RELEASES DOCUMENTS ON REPORTED UFO SIGHTING LAST NOVEMBER

The Federal Aviation Administration today released documents relating to the reported sighting of an unidentified flying object (UFO) over Alaska by a Japan Air Lines flight crew on November 17, 1986, saying it was unable to confirm the event.

The material was issued by FAA's Regional Office in Anchorage, Alaska, and included transcripts of pilot-controller communications, interviews with controllers and the flight crew, radar plots and other data.

FAA's Regional Public Affairs Officer Paul Steucke pointed out that FAA normally does not investigate UFO sightings but pursued the JAL incident in its role as the operator of the air traffic control system. He said the agency's objective was to determine if there was an unreported aircraft in the vicinity of the JAL flight that could present a safety hazard.

As part of the inquiry, Steucke said, radar data of the JAL flight track was reviewed by FAA experts at the agency's Technical Center in Atlantic City, N.J., using identical equipment. They determined that a second radar target near the JAL flight at the time of the reported sighting was not another aircraft but rather a split radar return from the JAL Boeing 747.

Technically, this is known as an "uncorrelated primary and beacon target return." It means that the primary radar signal reflected off the aircraft's surface did not correlate exactly with the pulse emitted by the aircraft's radar beacon transponder. This phenomenon is not unusual and gives the impression of two separate radar targets.

Steucke also noted that FAA controllers who monitored the JAL aircraft said in their statements that they thought there might have been another aircraft because of the dual radar targets. However, a northbound United Air Lines jet that was diverted by controllers to intercept the JAL flight path did establish visual contact with that aircraft but the pilots saw nothing else.

The Nov. 17 UFO sighting was reported by JAL Captain Kenjyu Terauchi on a cargo flight over the polar cap from Iceland to Japan via Anchorage. Captain Terauchi said he had visual contact from approximately the U.S.-Canadian border to south of Fairbanks. On Jan. 11, 1987, Captain Terauchi also reported another sighting in the same general area as the first.

Steucke said FAA is satisfied that the safety of the air traffic control system was not compromised by the Nov. 17 incident and plans no further investigation of the circumstances.

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Paul Steucke, FAA
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March 5, 1987

UNIDENTIFIED AIR TRAFFIC SIGHTINGS, ALASKA

(1) An Alaska Airlines flight crew of a Boeing 737 aircraft, flight #53, enroute from Nome to Anchorage, Alaska, on January 29, 1987, reported to the FAA Anchorage Air Route Traffic Control Center, the sighting of unidentified air traffic on their onboard weather radar system. The incident occurred at about 6:39 pm, 60 miles west of the community of McGrath, which is approximately 200 miles northwest of Anchorage. The aircraft was flying at 35,000 feet altitude at night, and the weather was clear.

Both pilots noticed the target on their weather radar scope and looked out the window to see if there was any "traffic" in front of them. At no time did either crewmember see anything outside the aircraft. The area is not within radar coverage of the FAA and the military reported they did not have any aircraft operating in the area at the time.

The flight crew of the Alaska Airlines passenger aircraft reported that the target on their radar moved at a very high rate of speed, approximately 5 miles on each sweep of the radar (5 miles per second). As the target moved off their radar in front of them, they changed the range of their radar from 50 miles to 100 miles and saw the target briefly before it became lost in the ground clutter created by the Alaska Range of mountains. The flight crew was interviewed by FAA inspectors when they landed at Anchorage. The FAA has no opinions or conclusions regarding the sighting.

(2) On January 11, 1987, at approximately 7:30 am (Sunday), Captain Kenjyu Terauchi, piloting Japan Airlines flight #628, a Boeing 747 aircraft from Iceland to Japan via Anchorage, Alaska, reported to the FAA Air Route Traffic Control Center in Anchorage, that he was seeing a group of unusual lights in front of his aircraft.

more...

The Captain requested the Center to record his description: "Ah, would you please, ah, record my voice, ah, ah, ah...this is Japanese. Futeikina raito ga mieteriru. Choodo ookina kuroi katamari ga mae ni iru. Kyorinishite go mairu. Dooyara uchuusen no moyoo." English translation: "We see irregular pulsating lights just there is a large black chunk just in front of us distance is five miles it seems to be a spaceship. Ah, it likes, ah, UFO, please, ah, check on your radar. Over."

The cargo aircraft was about 240 nautical miles north of Nenana, Alaska, at 37,000 feet elevation. The weather was clear with a temperature inversion reported at 23,500 feet.

Captain Terauchi reported the lights appeared in front of the aircraft, about 2,000 feet below, moved below the aircraft, and then disappeared behind the aircraft. The phenomenon then occurred again at approximately 151 nautical miles north of Nenana.

It was noted at the FAA interview of the flight crew, which was conducted when they landed at Anchorage, that the aircraft flight path was north of and directly over the town of Arctic Village, Alaska, at the time of the first sighting and 45 nautical miles northwest and west of the village of Fort Yukon during the second sighting.

Captain Terauchi said at the FAA interview that he thought the unusual lights he saw were those village lights that had been obscured or changed by ice crystals present in the atmosphere (the temperature inversion). The FAA has concluded its inquiry into this report and agrees with the Captain that the phenomena was most likely caused by ice crystals created by the reported temperature inversion.

(3) The crew of a Flying Tigers Flight #73, Boeing 747, cargo aircraft, flying at 37,000 feet, reported observing a "target" heading 320 degrees as it approached Anchorage on November 21, 1985. The Air Force was unable to confirm the sighting. This sighting was not investigated by the FAA and there is no file or retrievable data.

Steucke said, "The FAA is not in the UFO business and is not interested in reports that do not involve aircraft or the air traffic control system."

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Paul Steucke
FAA, Public Affairs Officer
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March 5, 1987

LACK OF "SCIENTIFIC" INVESTIGATION

The Federal Aviation Administration has a number of employees who do scientific research with regard to aircraft, aviation, and related electronic equipment. The FAA does not have the resources or the Congressional mandate to investigate sightings of unidentified flying objects.

We have not tried to determine what the crew of Japan Airlines flight 1628 saw based on scientific analysis of the stars, planets, magnetic fields, angle of view, etc. We have received letters from several persons suggesting that we ask the crew and others a variety of detailed questions from a scientific viewpoint. This we have not done and do not intend to do. We reviewed the data that was created by our systems, the interviews that were done by FAA to determine the status of the crew and the aircraft, and have provided that information to the public.

The FAA has completed its investigation of JAL flight 1628, and does not intend to pursue it any further."

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CONTACT: PAUL STEUCKE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 6, 1987 (REVISED FEB. 21, 1987)
#86-06 (#87-09)

**UNKNOWN TRAFFIC SIGHTED BY ALASKA AIRLINES CREW
ON ONBOARD WEATHER RADAR**

The Alaska Airlines flight crew of a Boeing 737 aircraft, flight #53, enroute from Nome to Anchorage, Alaska, on January 29, 1987, reported to the FAA Anchorage Air Route Traffic Control Center, the sighting of unidentified air traffic on their onboard weather radar system. The incident occurred at about 6:39 pm, 60 miles west of the community of McGrath, which is approximately 200 miles northwest of Anchorage. The aircraft was flying at 35,000 feet altitude at night, the weather was clear.

Both pilots noticed the target on their weather radar scope and looked to see if there was any "traffic" in front of them. At no time did either crewmember see anything outside the aircraft. The Captain asked the FAA air traffic controller in Anchorage if there was "any traffic in this-ah-area, do you---headed towards Anchorage?".

The FAA controllers at the air route control center in Anchorage reported a piper navajo at twelve thousand outbound from Anchorage towards McGrath, and a Beech estimated to be over McGrath at 4:04 pm, but nothing else.

The Alaska Airlines Captain responded, "Okay, we're just curious. Up at about our altitude (35,000) ah..headed that direction--thanks---...You haven't had any UFO reports lately...huh?". The controller responded, "Well I was just getting ready to ask you about that ...ah...could you tell me ...ah...the position of that aircraft."

The area is not within radar coverage of the FAA air route traffic control center. Control of aircraft in the area is done by the center with the use of radio contact. The controller on duty checked with the USAF, Alaskan Air Command, and was told that they did not have military aircraft operating in that area at that time.

more...

-2- ALASKA AIRLINES RADAR SIGHTING, JAN.29, 1987.

The flight crew reported that the target on their radar moved at a very high rate of speed, approximately 5 miles on each sweep of the radar (5 MILES PER SECOND). As the target moved off their radar they changed the range of their radar from 50 miles to 100 miles and saw the target briefly before it became lost in the ground clutter created by the Alaska Range of mountains.

The flight crew was interviewed by FAA inspectors when they landed at Anchorage.

Material developed as a result of this investigation will be released on or about March 5, 1987, in Anchorage, Alaska.

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* Release updated due to additional available material from inquiry.



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CONTACT: PAUL STEUCKE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FEBRUARY 23, 1987
#87-08

FAA PRESS CONFERENCE
MARCH 5, 1987...10:00 AM
AT
FAA CONFERENCE ROOM, THIRD FLOOR, EAST END, ANCHORAGE, FED. BUILDING

TO

RELEASE ALL MATERIALS RELATIVE TO THE INQUIRY OF THE

JAL FLIGHT 1628 SIGHTING OF
UNIDENTIFIED AIR TRAFFIC
ON NOVEMBER 17, 1986

Information and materials collected and reviewed by the Federal Aviation Administration in its inquiry to determine if unauthorized or unidentified air traffic was using the air travel corridor along with Japan Airlines flight 1628, on November 17, 1986, will be made available to the public and news media at the above listed location and time.

We would appreciate your **RSVP 907/271-5293** so that we can be sure to have a room large enough to accommodate press interest. It is difficult to predict media interest in this conference.

Materials and briefings by FAA Regional Public Affairs Officer Paul Steucke will provide the following information.

- * Presentation of FAA results/position,
- * FAA radar system and split beacon/targets,
- * Photographs, black & white, color of radar images,
- * Voice recordings on cassette of Pilot & Air Route Traffic Control Center, FAA interviews of Pilot and Crew, and written transcripts of same,
- * Written statement by Captain Terauchi,
- * Written statements by air traffic controllers,
- * List/Order Form to obtain all materials,
- * Response to questions.

A pre-recorded message on this subject, suitable for broadcast, will be available on the **FAA Media Message Recorders**, at 10:05 am, March 5, 1987, Alaska Standard Time; call area code **907/277-7073**, or **907/277-7122**.

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