

# AN ENCOUNTER OF A BOEING 727 WITH A HUGE "CIGAR" OVER JAPAN (1978). EXCLUSIVE REPORT FOR FLYING SAUCER REVIEW.

© BY YUSUKE J. MATSUMURA, Director of CBA INTERNATIONAL (CBAI), Japan, and FSR Consultant. [N.B. One of our very oldest, and himself a former WWII Japanese Air Force pilot! G.C.]

We at CBAI recently received a pilot's report about the experience of the crew of Flight NH257, a Boeing 727 passenger craft of ALL NIPPON AIRWAYS (ANA) in 1978 when they were en route from Tokyo westwards to Fukuoka. (see map). While flying in the early twilight sky, over Okayama, they spotted, ahead of them, a long seemingly "cloud-like" object that at first appeared to be a DC-8 aircraft. But as they came nearer they perceived it to be "shaped like a cigar" and, flying at a height of only about 150 m. below their plane, it accompanied them and kept pace with them at an estimated distance of 500 m. at the closest point of approach.

And then suddenly all three officers saw the thing "belch out plumes of smoke, like a steam locomotive"!

This type of case, classified as a "cigar-smoke trail" in foreign countries, is exceedingly rare. Only a few cases have been reported throughout the entire 50 years of UFO research, and so far none have been detailed. In the history of Japan this is an unparalleled event. The amazing phenomenon that the aircraft crew saw the object "belch out plumes of smoke" is extraordinary, and in fact is unique... the first of its kind in the world. This is one of the very best among the eyewitness cases of close approaches of aircraft to UFOs.

"LOOK! IT'S NOT A DC-8. IT HAS NO WINGS!"

On February 11, 1978, at 1640 hrs. (ten minutes delayed on departure time) the ALL-NIPPON AIRWAYS Flight NH257 (B727-200) had taken off from the Tokyo Haneda Airport for Fukuoka, and was on the J20L jet route over Osaka VOR, with heading of 262 degrees and at an altitude of 31,000 ft. and cruising speed of Mach 0.8. In command of the plane was Captain Katsuhiko Ishiwatari, and his Co-pilot was Masanao Itazu and his Flight-Engineer Shigeru Hayashi.

Shortly after they had passed over Osaka VOR, the Captain spotted what seemed like a long and slender cloud-like object at the same altitude and at about 10 - 20 nautical miles ahead of them. Little idea did he have of what this was to be the prelude! His plane was now over Kojima Peninsula, in Okayama Prefecture. And it was a fine day, without a speck of cloud, and the sky still held light.

At about 18 03 hrs. the plane began to tremble due to the direct influence of CAT (clear-air turbulence), so Captain Ishiwatari contacted Fukuoka Control (ACC) and asked for approval to reduce altitude - though it was before scheduled time. Fukuoka did not permit the change in altitude, and the Captain wondered why they did this

Peering ahead again, he saw that the long slender cloud-like object that looked like a DC-8 was a little below and in the 10 o'clock direction. Still taking it to be a DC-8 he gave the call "TRAFFIC IN SIGHT" to

Fukuoka ACC ("I visually identify a DC-8 near by"), in the expectation that he would now get clearance for descent. But their reply was "NO TRAFFIC" ("there is no such a plane"). This surprised him and he took another look. And, as he has now told us, "I was astonished. It was not a DC-8 or indeed any ordinary plane. It had no wings! It was terrific!"

At first this object, which was situated on his forward port side, appeared to be stationary and at about 3,000 ft below. Then it came nearer to the plane, to a distance of about 500 m. or so and only about 500ft (150 m) below the plane. Straining his eyes to get a clearer view, the Captain now perceived that it was a gigantic cigar-shaped thing, somehow foggy in detail despite its great size, and that it possessed no windows. As for its colouring it was "an ashy, non-glittering silver, like the duralumin of the fuselages of our planes", and this colour underwent no change. The huge cigar-shaped object was travelling calmly - and apparently soundlessly - and kept pace with the Captain's plane, at the same speed, for a few minutes, still just below the plane, so that one felt that, by reaching out from the Captain's seat through the left-hand cabin window (L-2) he could have touched it.

The sky was clear, without a speck of cloud or anything else except this object. It was a rare situation, and the captain said to his cabin crew: "That's a strange sort of cloud!". As he explained to me later, he said: "In our job we see clouds all the time and everywhere, and we seldom mention them". And, as he assured me, that had been, as he realized later, quite certainly NO CLOUD!

When I spoke with the Flight Engineer about it, his comment was: "At first it was just stationary, and looked foggy, like cloud. Generally speaking, when you see a speck of cloud in a blue sky it rapidly changes in shape and then vanishes. But that "strange cloud" did not lose its shape, and steadily got closer to us and was moving at the same speed as our plane. Had it been an aircraft, it would have been of the apparent size of a B727 seen at a distance of ten miles away. When however it had come close to us, it had the size of a B727 at seven miles. I kept watching it, wondering what it was...."

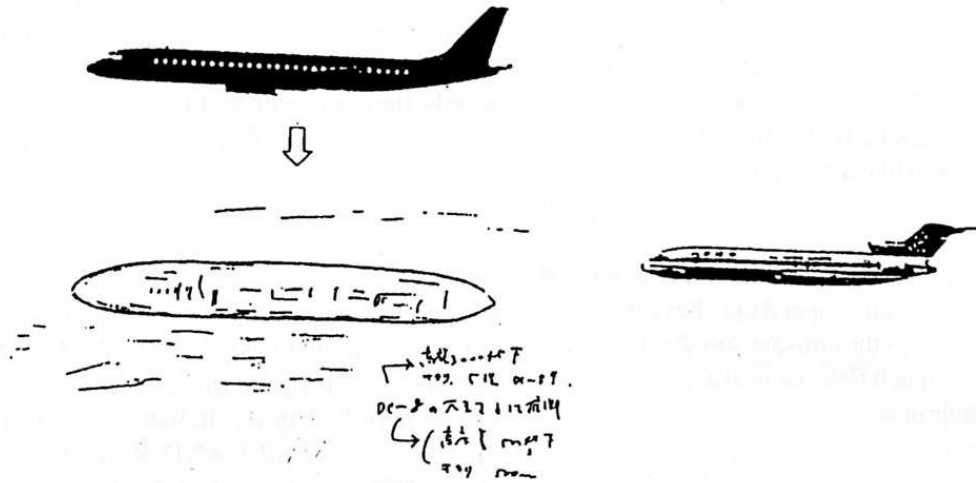
## "THE OBJECT BELCHED OUT PLUMES OF A SMOKE-LIKE SUBSTANCE, LIKE A LOCOMOTIVE!"

The crew were observing this mysterious object through the cockpit window L-2 (see 1,2,3, and 4 of Fig. 4).

Suddenly they saw it begin to move, belching plumes of a smoke-like substance from its tail section - like a steam locomotive! The "smoke" extended for a length of about two or three times the length of the cigar itself, and

Fig. 1

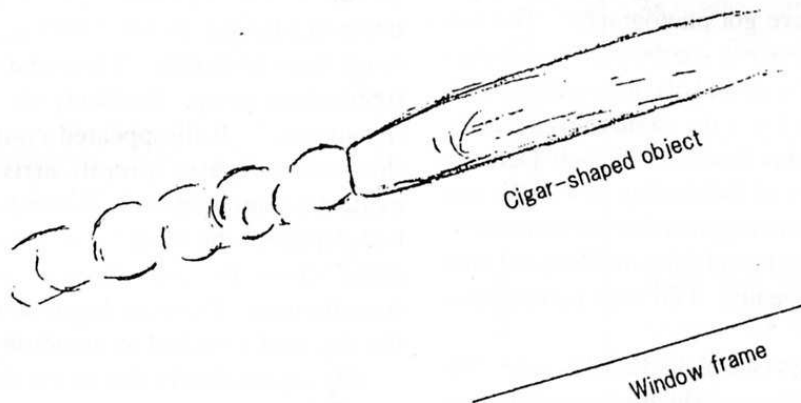
### DRAWING SHOWING THE SITUATION OF THE ENCOUNTER



This is a drawing showing the situation of the giant cigar-shaped object that encountered ANA B727-200 about 500 m in distance and about 150 m in below of the plane. At first the Captain took it for DC-8 (shown in silhouette; 57.12 m overall) and estimated the size based on it, which indicates that its actual size exceeds the figures above. ☆ ☆ ☆

Fig. 2

### PLUMES OF SMOKE-LIKE SUBSTANCES WERE BELCHED OUT



The cigar-shaped object belching smoke-like substances like a steam locomotive. It must be significantly large in comparison with the window frame of the cockpit. (Both sketches were handwritten by the Captain for us exclusively)

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was of the same colour as the cigar - grey.

The three officers viewed the scene with dumb astonishment. What on earth could this flying object be that belched out plumes of smoke like a steam locomotive? They could not believe their eyes. It was almost a hallucinatory sight, like in a dream, though they were aware enough that this could be no scene from an SF

film, or some fantasized Japanese story entitled "GINGA TETSUDO" ("RAILWAY IN THE GALAXY"). *This was real.*

The Flight-Engineer unfastened his belt and strained to observe closely. He says the plumes of the smoke-like substance held their shape, and trailed closely behind the craft.

#### NOTE BY EDITOR OF FSR.

One most highly interesting statement came from the Captain. He said that, *when the plumes of smoke were emitted, the object was propelled forward by them, as if by jet power.*

The Co-Pilot said: *"I switched on the radar, but there was no sign of a response on it. I tried hard to search for it by adjusting the angle, but the radar did not detect it. Anyway I am sure that was no aircraft."*

Maybe the thing was too near for the radar to give a return. As they continued to watch it, the object moved away in the direction of 10 o'clock. By the time that it was over Iwakuni AJ, it now looked like a stratus cloud, and finally it vanished from their sight in the sky offshore of Nyutabaru in Southern Kyushu Province.

The Flight-Engineer said that the object had made off at great speed. Given that its initial speed may have been say, about Mach 0.8 - the same as the cruising speed of the B727, then one could estimate that it flew away at a speed of about Mach 1.6. He said their instruments were working well.

Summarising the incident to me when we discussed it, Captain Ishiwatari said: *"When I first caught sight of it - I was of course guessing, and given the distance, etc., I was taking it as possibly being a Japan Air Lines DC-8, but of course its actual size must have been much greater. I was merely guessing".* What he emphasised most to me, as he recalled it, was his astonishment at the thing's *enormous size.*

And, he went on, *"I was truly astonished when I saw the object suddenly belching out plumes of smoke like a steam locomotive. I had witnessed something truly astounding, but I could not disclose the story, because I was a pilot. Today, when I look back on it, how much I wish I had made an announcement and asked our passengers to try to get photographs. We could have got photographs! The sky was still light enough! Unless you see these sorts of things yourself you cannot believe them, and of course nobody took MY story seriously. I heard just the same thing recently from a pilot of the present day Japanese Air Self-Defence Force who also encountered an astounding UFO. We can certainly say that it is an agonizing situation for someone to be in who has encountered an astonishing incident and then finds that nobody will believe him. I do wish I could have disclosed it at the time!"*

Finally, a word about how we picked up this case. We found it among more than 100 cases which we covered when we were planning to commemorate "FIFTY YEARS OF UFOs", and we saw how dramatic it was! This was the first-ever "cigar smoke-trail" case in Japan. This particular East-West air route over Okayama across the Seto Island Sea has been nicknamed by pilots "THE UFO GINZA", [The "Oxford Street of the UFOs". G.C.] because such notable UFO activity along that route has been observed by so many military and civilian pilots. And this astonishing case of the smoke-belching cigar seems to us to have been the highlight of them all, and therefore worthy of special note in the Ufological history of Japan.

INTERVIEW. Captain Ishiwatari was interviewed by myself and by Setsuko Fujii, of our staff, and the Co-Pilot and Flight-Engineer were interviewed by Kiyoshi Takahashi, also of our staff. Overall report compiled by myself, Y.J. MATSUMURA.

Big "cigar-shaped" UFOs "Carriers" or "mother-ships" have of course been seen all over the world and have been reported constantly throughout all the issues of FSR. An interesting point, moreover, is that, in the UFO Wave of 1986/97 over the U.S.A., there apparently never was a single case in which anyone reported seeing any disc or "saucer"-shaped craft, but all objects seen were described as huge "airships" or "dirigibles" - in other words they were probably what we are today calling "cigars". Nor were there any "Triangles" - these were to come much later!

As for our colleague Matsumura's suggestion that his 1978 report of a "cigar" belching out plumes of "smoke-like substance" is unique in the annals of "our subject", I beg to disagree, and would like to draw attention to my report AMAZING NEWS FROM RUSSIA (FSR 8/6, 1962) in which I gave my translation, from Italian, of an article published in the Italian scientific journal OLTRE IL CIELO: MISSILI AND RAZZI (MISSILES AND ROCKETS), issue No. 105, for June 1 - 15, 1962) by the writer Alberto Fenoglio. (And I must emphasise that Fenoglio was *not* himself a "UFO buff", and was not writing in a "UFO journal" but in a serious publication devoted to missiles and rockets as its title indicates).

Fenoglio had it seems just been in Russia and had been discussing what were unquestionably UFO cases and UFO sightings with numerous Soviet citizens whom he had met.

Here is his report about a "cigar" that also behaved in a rather remarkable fashion:

*"Last summer, over the city of Voronezh (51° 40N, 38 05° E -G.C.) a giant cigar, at least 800 m. long, came down to a height of only 2,000 m., in broad daylight, and hung there immobile. Thousands saw it and there was tremendous panic. Suddenly the cigar "began to grow transparent". It disappeared completely. Shortly after this, some fighter aircraft arrived and flew around, evidently searching for it. Seconds after the baffled pilots had departed, the monster was back again "in the same place" above the city. Then a vast jet of flame shot out from its stern. The cigar began to move, rose steeply into the sky, and vanished at immense speed"*

My suggestion is that in the Japanese case, the cigar was flying on a regular level course, and its ejection of "smoke" indicates that it was under some sort of what we call "jet propulsion". In the Russian case, more violent and immediate propulsion was required, as the craft was about to go straight upwards, and so full throttle was given, and a blast of flames was seen.

As for the point that the cigar became "transparent" and then invisible, I can quote a similar case, from Argentina, which I reported years ago. (No time to discuss it now, but if possible we will do so at a later date. Obviously the most likely explanation is that this is an example of the Visitors' ability to "bend light rays").

However, owing to the general resemblance of these cases, I give below a reprint of another one, very similar too the Japanese one, and which we had published in FSR so long ago as 1981! G.C. ■

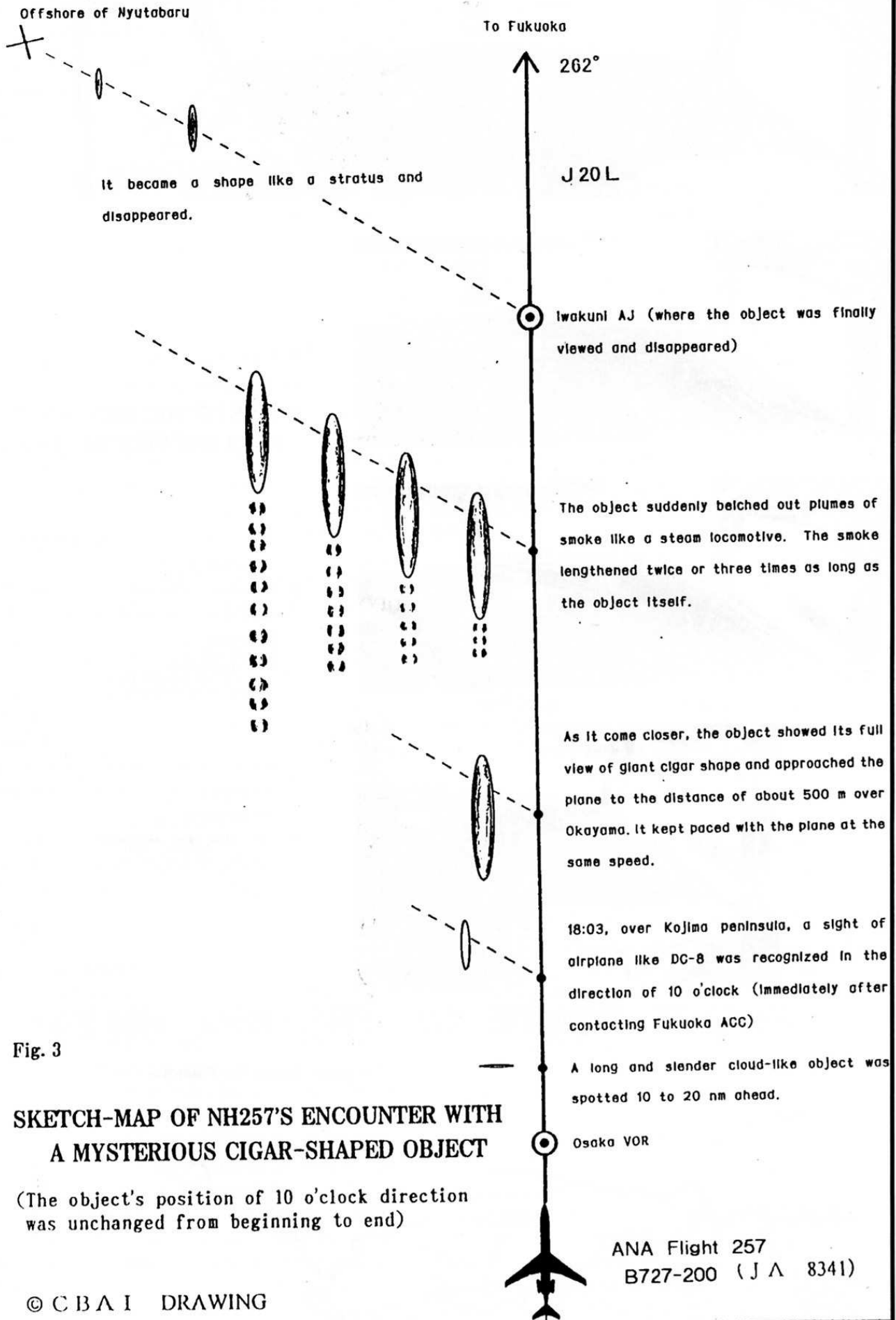


Fig. 3

**SKETCH-MAP OF NH257'S ENCOUNTER WITH  
A MYSTERIOUS CIGAR-SHAPED OBJECT**

(The object's position of 10 o'clock direction was unchanged from beginning to end)

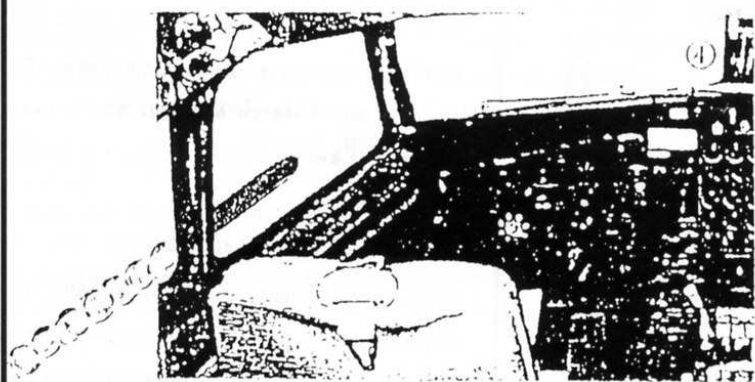
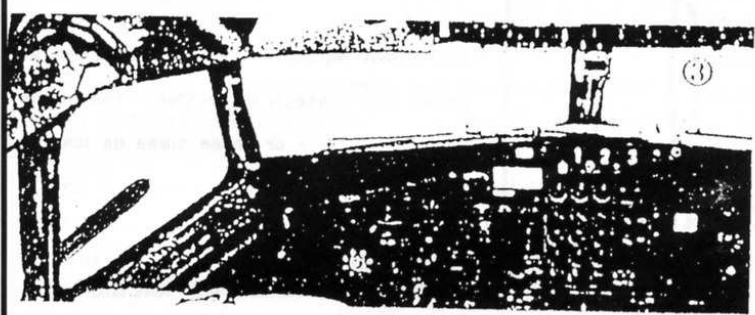
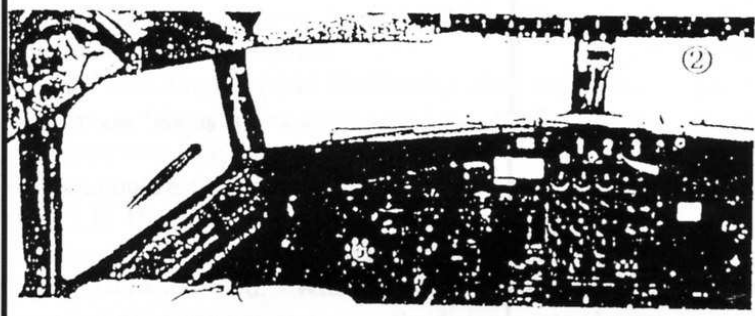
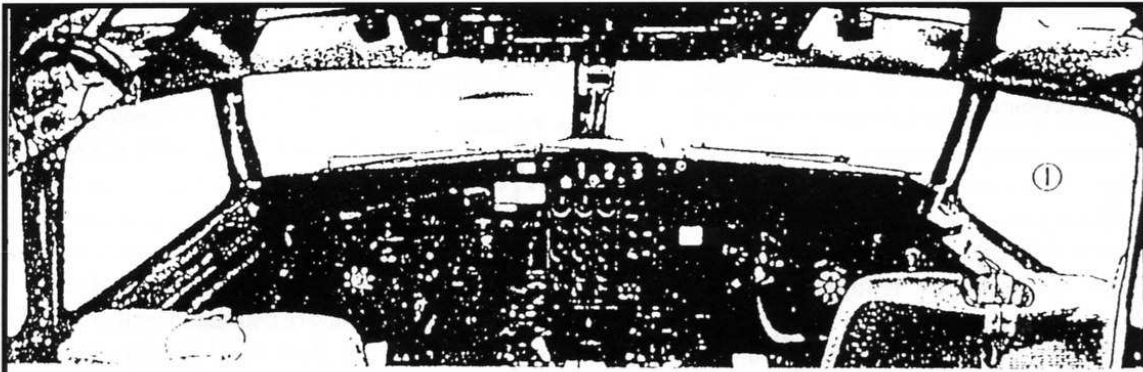


Fig. 4

CHANGE OF THE OBJECT'S POSITION FROM THE VIEW OF COCKPIT

1. A long and slender cloud like object was spotted 10 to 20 nm ahead
2. Immediately after contacting Fukuoka ACC, a sight of airplane like DC-8 was recognized a little below in the direction of 10 o'clock over Kojima peninsula.
3. Passing Over Okayama, as it came closer, the object showed its full view of giant cigar shape and approached the plane to the distance of about 500 m and about 150 m below the plane. It kept paced with the plane for a few minutes at the same speed.
4. The crew was astonished that the object suddenly belched out plumes of smoke like a steam locomotive. (Source: sketches handwritten by the Capt. Ishiwatari)

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FLIGHT ROUTE OF THE ANA NH 257

— from Tokyo to Fukuoka



# A GIGANTIC "CIGAR" OVER THE ATLANTIC IN 1963.

BY GORDON CREIGHTON. [Reprint from FSR Vol. 27, No.3 (Nov. 1981). In view of the extraordinary similarity to the last case, I feel I really must republish this earlier one -Ed.]

In 1980 we received a letter from a lady who had recently become a reader of FSR, stating that she would like to talk with someone from the *Review* and give us a confidential account of a strange experience that she had had many years before. It had been terrifying at the time and had left a most vivid impression in her memory. Having no knowledge of UFOs then, she had no clue as to what she might have seen. It was only after the chance purchase of a few books, and the discovery of FSR, that she had realized the possible nature of her experience.

The lady is from one of the countries of Western Europe that are members of NATO. She is now married to an Englishman, and it so happens that her home is not far from mine. For reasons which will be evident, she has asked that on no account should her name and address, or her nationality at birth, be divulged. I have interviewed her twice, and FSR Director R.H. Bryan Winder also heard the first account which she gave. Her statements are supported by a lengthy and detailed written version and a sketch. For reasons of economy I have reduced her story to more compact proportions. The gist of it is as follows:-

"The events which I now describe took place in the first or second week of May 1963.

"I was at the time working for NATO as an English language secretary, and based in Paris. On the day in question I was one of a party of 50 NATO personnel who were en route to Canada for the NATO Ministerial Meetings in Ottawa. Our plane, an Air Canada DC8, carried what seemed to be the usual crew, and two stewardesses, though I had the impression that the flight was under military or NATO control.

We took off from Orly Airport, Paris, some time after 10.00 a.m., and we were told that the flight to Ottawa would take about seven hours. As there were only 50 of us, the plane was relatively empty. I took a window seat on the port side (left) near the wing. The other two seats in my row remained empty throughout the flight. As NATO personnel we were all of course well known to each other, and very much a 'family group'.

"The weather was beautiful, and the Captain announced that we would fly at 36,000 (or maybe 38,000 - I do not recall clearly) feet. After lunch had been served, I sat enjoying the view of the vast expanse of sky above the clouds. The windows of the DC8 were very large, the largest I seem to recall having seen on an aircraft, and came down quite low beside the passenger.

"I was just reaching down to take a book from my hold-all, and was astonished to glimpse below the 'plane something dark and absolutely tremendous that stood out in vivid contrast to the brightness all around. I could not believe my eyes. I pressed close to the window in unbelief and there, almost beneath the DC8, was a gigantic dark grey 'torpedo'. It seemed menacing and frightening, and I had the impression that it was stationary. It was utterly unlike anything that I had ever seen in my whole life. It

looked as though made of steel. No portholes or windows were visible. No wings or projections. Nothing but the long perfect torpedo form, with its bullet-shaped head, and the rear end which was cut off sharply and squarely. (1) The monster - and I emphasise that it was this terrifying size that impressed me - was well below us. I thought maybe 2,000 metres or so below us, but of course I had no way of being able to gauge this or to estimate the size of the thing.

"I looked down again quickly at the monster, and saw that a swathe of tiny clouds were beginning to pass over it, though it remained visible through them for a few seconds before being lost to my sight.

"I sat there in utter amazement that such a craft could exist. Why, I thought, had I never heard, in all my life, of the existence of anything like this! I felt stunned, and dazed, contemplating my utter ignorance that such things could be, and that I could know nothing whatever about them.

"I glanced around the cabin. Most of my fellow-passengers were reading, or dozing, or asleep. Only from the rear came sounds of animation from a group who were playing bridge.

"I sat there feeling utterly frustrated, both because of my inability to explain to myself what it was that I had seen, and because apparently not one of the others had seen it. At any rate, not one gave any sign of having done so, (2) and I felt too baffled to ask, and too scared lest I might prove to be the only witness in which case they would simply laugh at me. I sat back and closed my eyes, feeling that my mind had been completely blown. I resolved that, when back in Paris, I would talk about it to one of the NATO experts on nuclear weapons, a man whom I knew well, and with whom I had often chattered on all sorts of subjects, such as earthquakes, problems of energy, and so on. (But when I next saw him, and had the opportunity to tell him about my 'monster cigar', I just could not bring myself to raise the subject. My courage failed me. I did not want to be laughed at. The whole thing seemed too incredible to be taken seriously.)

"As for the rest of the NATO party, I never dared to mention it to any of them, out of fear of being thought completely mad. But I made a private resolution that I would go on trying to find out what it could have been. (Little did I realize then that it would take seventeen years.)

"I had of course heard the occasional story about 'flying saucers,' but I always thought that the name meant that these were just little things, no bigger than a real saucer. I had no idea whatever that craft of all shapes and sizes were being seen, all over the world, and that they were all being given the blanket name of 'flying saucers.'

"To be truthful, I had already heard one story about a 'cigar', said to be some 15 or 20 metres long, seen by