

A HIGH ALTITUDE OBJECT PHOTOGRAPHED OVER PUERTO RICO

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Translation from the Spanish by Gordon Creighton

FLORIN GHEORGHITĂ'S article about the high-altitude objects seen over Romania* has reminded me of the following interesting case which occurred here in Puerto Rico on April 30, 1969, when a strikingly similar object was photographed from a military aircraft.

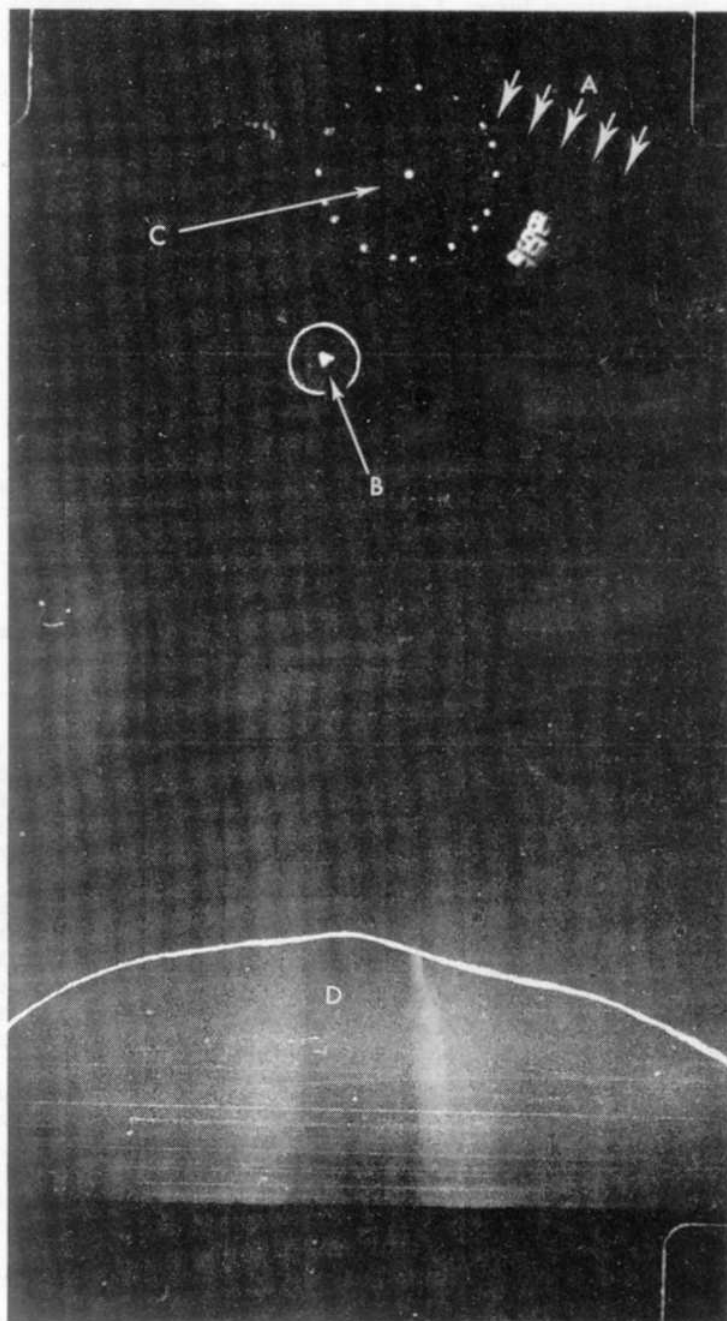
The UFO was discovered, high in the sky, at dawn, by hundreds of eyewitnesses on the southern coast of the Island of Puerto Rico. The first official report about it came from the encampment of the National Guard at Salinas. The object was travelling on a westward course, and was picked up intermittently on the radar, according to the account given by the control tower. (It was also reported that the same or a similar object had been detected during the previous night, over the little island of Vieques, off the eastern coast of Puerto Rico, and on April 30 hundreds of people at La Romana, in the neighbouring Dominican Republic, also saw "a luminous object travelling slowly eastwards emitting flashes.")

The Air National Guard of Puerto Rico sent up a T-33 fighter to investigate the morning intruder. Still travelling from east to west, its altitude was estimated at between 29,000 and 31,000 ft.

At about 10.00 a.m. the Air National Guard sent up a second aircraft. This was an F-104, which climbed to about 60,000 ft but found that the UFO was still above it. From the photographs secured from the F-104, the altitude of the UFO has been calculated at 70,000 or 80,000 ft. It was moving very slowly — at about eight miles per hour — and was about 200 ft. in length. It was seemingly solid, white in colour, with one area brighter than the rest (apparently reflecting the rays of the sun). In shape it appeared to be triangular, with a concave base. A B-52 bomber from Ramey Air Force Base also reported picking it up on his radarscope.

On the following day, May 1, the same object, or a similar one, was seen by various pilots of the Caribair Line. And on May 2 a pilot flying to Port-au-Prince in Haiti reported having sighted a similar object.

I have made a detailed investigation of this case. I was able to interview Charles Bumstead, the pilot of the T-33 aircraft which was sent up to take a look at the UFO. And I was subsequently also able to interview Colonel Fred Brown, the commanding officer of the F-104.



Key:

- A Sun Rays
- B Object
- C Jet Gun Sight
- D Sun Reflection on jet camera lens

* Published in *FSR Case Histories* No.13, February 1973.

Moreover we got a very full and detailed report on the case from Mr. Harry M. Hoose of the U.S. Weather Bureau. Mr. Hoose told us, *inter alia*, that the UFO apparently had a radio transmitter, inasmuch as "between 9.00 and 10.00 a.m. the radio signals from balloons that we had released suffered inexplicable interference."

Press reports on the sighting appeared in the Puertorican papers *El Dia* and *San Juan Star* of May 1, and also in *El Carbide*, a newspaper published in the Dominican Republic, for the same date.

Some time later, I read a report about a NASA project, in which they were said to be launching immense study-balloons from Ascension Island, off the West Coast of Africa. According to the report (which was by Marvin Miles and in the *Los Angeles Times*) these balloons, globe-shaped, reached altitudes of between 68,000 and 79,000 feet. Marvin Miles said there were still seven of these globes in orbit around the Earth, transmitting scientific data to the satellite *Nimbus 4*, which was in a polar orbit. Each of the huge globes was described as carrying 10 lbs. of scientific instruments. The report also mentioned that fifteen more globes of the same type had been launched.

I accordingly wrote to NASA requesting further details as to the precise positioning of these special balloons, but received no reply.

In view of the fact that the air currents passing over the West Indies and the southern part of Puerto Rico originate from the West Coast of Africa, I formed the conclusion that the object seen over Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic by hundreds of people on April 30 and May 1 might very well have been one of those balloons. The characteristics of the object over Puerto Rico certainly resemble very much the features of a balloon.

The photo shown above comes from the film taken from one of the aircraft sent up to intercept the object, and was given to me by a member of the crew. The circle outlined on the photo is the airplane's gunsight.

I hope that these details about the recent case over Puerto Rico will help FSR readers to secure a better grasp of the situation, and help in clarifying the all-important question of what is a sonde balloon or a high-altitude cosmic research balloon and what is a true "UFO" in our meaning of the term.

Readers' Reports

More than moonshine?

Dear Sir,—This report appeared in today's issue of *Le Parisien* (September 11):

"Maubeuge. Two 'flying saucers', or at least so identified by those who saw them, were observed in two communities around Maubeuge (Nord). The first appearance took place on September 3 at about 21.40 hours. A man in his seventies saw a luminous cylinder of red colour about 4 metres from the ground. The machine moved slowly and silently, now vertically and now horizontally. After watching the 'saucer' for some ten (*dizaine*) minutes, the old man went to get his neighbour who also observed the phenomenon. Later the two men saw the departure of the machine.

"The second UFO (*OVNI in French*) was seen on the next day at about 23.10 hours in another community near Maubeuge by four persons. It was of elliptical form and emitted strong whitish luminosity as well as converging beams of light. The sighting lasted for about ten (*une dizaine*) minutes. The vegetation at the places where the sightings occurred was slightly burnt. Parisian experts came to the sites and took away samples of soil for analysis."

I realise that the information is very poor. "*Une dizaine de minutes*" is a vague French expression. No names of the communities are given. And who were those Parisian experts? No source of this information is given either. However, I thought that this might be of interest to you.

Incidentally, the town of Maubeuge in the French Department of Nord has a peculiar reputation. The popular saying is that "this is not worth the moonlight at Maubeuge" — describing something utterly worthless. But then the town does exist, and if the sightings really occurred there, there is no way of avoiding it.

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A Revisitation

Dear Sir,—At the time of my first sighting, in 1956, I was living in Southampton. I remember it was a glorious summer day with a clear blue sky. Four workmates and I were enjoying the sun during our lunch hour, when suddenly someone spotted a distant light in the sky, about as bright as a large star at night. When viewed through binoculars (6 x 30) it was seen to be slowly revolving.

While I was using the binoculars, I saw three disc-shaped objects streak across the sky towards us. Then quite suddenly they seemed to disappear (perhaps because they then turned edge-ways-on to us). Unfortunately only one other man spotted these discs with the naked eye. The "star" or "mother-ship" (?) remained perfectly stationary in the sky for another four hours, over the south-west part of the town.

About two years later, at the same place, whilst at work, for no apparent reason I suddenly said to a workmate, "Let's go outside and see if we can see a UFO." Much to our surprise, on looking up we saw a large disc-shaped object silhouetted very clearly against high white cloud. It was actually coming in our direction and flew with a stop-and-go motion, sometimes hovering for a second. Finally, when directly overhead, it shot straight upwards and was lost to our sight, quickly disappearing into a patch of clear blue sky.

On both occasions there was little or no wind. The time of the first sighting was approximately 1.00 p.m. and the second 12.00 noon.

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