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Radar recording misses flight of UFO alongside JAL jetliner

Scraps Howard News Service

A Federal Aviation Administration probe of a UFO that showed up on an air controller's screen in November was set back when a radar recording failed to show the craft's signal, an FAA spokesman said Friday.

Agency officials on Friday also interviewed for a second time a Japanese pilot who evaded what he said was an unidentified flying object over Alaska in mid-November. An FAA controller helped in the evasion.

But the UFO sighting remained a mystery; FAA and Air Force sources said it was unlikely the origin of the craft described by Kenji Terauchi would ever be determined.

Terauchi, a veteran pilot ferrying JAL Flight 1628 from Iceland to Japan, told United Press International last Tuesday that on the evening of Nov. 17, he had been shadowed for

more than 30 minutes and for nearly 400 miles over Alaska by a mysterious aircraft much larger than his own plane.

The object, which Terauchi said was twice the size of an aircraft carrier, was accompanied by two smaller aircraft, the pilot said.

The night was clear, and FAA investigators who questioned the crew concluded in a report that they were rational and professional and showed no evidence of drug or alcohol use.

Anchorage FAA spokesman Paul Steuche said the agency was investigating the matter further only to find out if unknown aircraft had violated the Japanese Air Lines plane's airspace, not to ascertain if the unknown craft had extraterrestrial origins.

He said he did not expect Terauchi to add to the information in press accounts.

But Steuche confirmed that an FAA air traffic controller

had spotted the unknown craft as a "weak, intermittent signal" on his own radar. The signal appeared within eight miles of the JAL aircraft and at the same speed and altitude.

When the recorded radar transmission was replayed later, however, there was no image of any aircraft except for the commercial airliner, Steuche said. He said it was possible the signal from the UFO was strong enough to be picked up while the incident was occurring but not strong enough to register on the radar recording system.

Officials with the Air Force's Alaskan Air Command initially told the FAA air controller they, too, could see the object's radar signal. But on Friday Capt. Larry Jenkins, a command spokesman, said the signal didn't last long enough to be confirmed and that the command now attributed the signal to electronic clutter.

"We're not doing any further investigation," Jenkins said. The FAA has no systematic procedure for evaluating re-

ports of unidentified flying objects. The Air Force once did, but abandoned such investigations more than 15 years ago, Jenkins said.

A spokesman for the North American Aerospace Defense Command in Colorado said officials there had no radar signal that could correlate with what Terauchi described and were not investigating the incident.

Terauchi and his crew of two told the FAA at 6:19 p.m. on Nov. 17 that they were fast approaching the lights of a large flying object and requested help in avoiding it.

An FAA controller, spotting the signal of the mysterious craft on radar, directed the JAL to take evasive action, at one point approving a 360-degree turn to shake the object.

Steuche said both objects appeared to be traveling about 550 miles per hour at 25,000 feet in altitude and traveled together for more than 350 miles.