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No show UFO: Radar recording shows aircraft is still a mystery

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 yesterday.

Agency officials yesterday also interviewed for a second time a Japanese pilot who was helped by an FAA air controller to evade what he said was an unidentified flying object over Alaska in mid-November.

But the UFO sighting remained a mystery, with FAA and Air Force sources saying it was unlikely that the origin of the craft described by Kenju Terauchi would ever be determined.

Terauchi, a veteran pilot ferrying JAL Flight 1628 from Iceland to Japan, last Tuesday said 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. FAA investigators who questioned

the crew concluded 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 to find out if unknown aircraft had violated the JAL plane's airspace, not to ascertain if the unknown craft had extraterrestrial origins.

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.

The FAA has no systematic procedure for evaluating reports of unidentified flying objects. The Air Force once did, but abandoned such investigations more than 15 years ago.