

POST, Washington, DC - Jan. 4, 1987 CR: M. Opsasnick

FAA Reopens Its Inquiry Into UFOs *Objects Violated Alaskan Airspace*

United Press International

ANCHORAGE, Jan. 3.—The Federal Aviation Administration has reopened its inquiry into what happened the night a Japan Air Lines Boeing 747 cargo crew reported seeing unidentified flying objects (UFOs) over Alaska, an FAA spokesman said today.

FAA investigators interviewed Capt. Kenji Terasahi, the pilot, for a second time Friday and are reviewing all radar records from the evening of Nov. 17, 1986, when an unidentified blip appeared on radar screens as the JAL crew reported seeing mysterious lights.

"The reason we're exploring it is that it was a violation of airspace," FAA spokesman Paul Stencke said.

"That may sound strange, but that's what it was."

When the incident first came to light last week, the FAA reported that it was no longer investigating and considered the matter an unexplained sighting.

However, a thorough review of available data in the case began Friday and will continue this week, Stencke said, noting that he is calling it an inquiry, not an investigation.

"The object of the inquiry—of collecting all the data and interviewing people—is to identify the object, if possible," Stencke said.

"However, considering the type of data we have available, no one considers it realistic that we can identify the object," he added.

The decision to reopen the inquiry was made by the regional director of the FAA, Stencke said.

An unknown object appeared on radar screens monitored by the Anchorage Air Route Traffic Control Center, the Alaska Air Command at Elmendorf Air Force Base and in the cockpit of the JAL plane.

Air Force officials have dismissed the unidentified blip as "random clutter," but Stencke said the FAA's radar system is designed to remove this kind of clutter.