

# Did a UFO follow Japan Air Lines jet? FAA just

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Was it a bird? Was it a plane?  
Was it a flying walnut?  
The Federal Aviation Administration says it doesn't know.

The FAA, winding up its investigation of a purported UFO sighting by a Japan Air Lines crew last Nov. 17, said yesterday that a review of radar data was inconclusive.

Investigators simply cannot determine with certainty if Flight 1628 was followed by an unidentified flying object.

Documents, statements, interviews and radar data released by the FAA reveal a professional, experienced pilot and crew whose reports of a gigantic "flying walnut" with white and yellow strobe lights seem doomed to remain a mystery.

According to Capt. Kenju Terauchi, the Boeing 747 cargo flight, which was carrying fine French Beaujolais from Paris to Tokyo, with stops in Iceland and Anchorage, was followed by the UFO for 400 miles.

The UFO's maneuvers included descending and flying alongside the jet after the crew had received permission to fly in a circle over Fairbanks.

"The crew was honorable and capable and reported what they saw. Our FAA equipment, however, is unable to support their description," Paul Steucke, an FAA spokesman, said by telephone from Anchorage.

"Based on the data, interviews and other material we had to work with, it has been clearly proven that the airspace was not breached, and that the aircraft seemed to be operating properly — which were our biggest concerns," Steucke said. "The air traffic system was not compromised in any way; it was operating

photo." His statements contain references to one and/or two spaceships.

"Most unexpectedly, two spaceships stopped in front of our face, shooting off lights," he stated. "The inside cockpit shined brightly and I felt warm in the face.

"Perhaps firing of jets was the result to kill inertia of their quick high-speed maneuver, but the ships appeared as if they were stopped in one place in front of us.

"Then three to seven seconds later a fire like from jet engines stopped and became a small circle of lights as they began to fly in level flight at the same speed as we were, showing numerous numbers of exhaust pipes . . . It is impossible for any man-made machine to make a sudden appearance in front of a jumbo jet that is flying 910 kilometers per hour and

At the same time, Steucke emphasized that the FAA "was not saying that the crew did not see what they said they saw. We're not placing ourselves in the position of making any judgments."

Radar data were reviewed because unexplained "blips" appeared on radar screens at the time of the sighting.

Ordinarily, Steucke said, two separate modes of radar will bounce back simultaneous signals from an object, and the signal will show up as a tiny but smooth line on radar screens.

In the case of the purported UFO, however, there were several "uncorrelated returns" on the screens. This means that the signals did not come back simultaneously, but separately — and nobody really knows why.

"There are three or four things that can cause that (uncorrelated returns)," Steucke said. "One is magnetic phenomena, two is

**The ending of this encounter was very well. We worried because we do not know the purpose of the spaceship. . . I hope we humans will meet them in the near future and confirm my experience.**

— Japan Air Lines pilot Kenju Terauchi

to move along in a formation paralleling our aircraft . . ."

Many explanations have been offered. It was Jupiter, one says. The radar blips were simply split images of the same object — the Boeing 747, another says.

A second sighting near Anchorage in January — also by Terauchi but with a different crew — was explained as ice crystals that were catching lights from a village below.

tion of FAA radar equipment and four is a transponder malfunction (on the airplane itself). We eliminated everything but the possibility that the transponder itself was malfunctioning."

A lengthy statement made by Terauchi and released with other documents described the crew's wonder and initial disbelief at the inexplicable sight.

"We kept observing the lights below us in left front, thinking it was ridiculous to have laser (sic) beam testing at the end of a tundra area," Terauchi wrote. "Then the two lights began to move in a manner different from ordinary aircraft maneuvers, like two bear cubs playing with each other . . ."

At one point, Terauchi tried to take a picture of the object but ". . . then our aircraft started to vibrate and I gave up taking a

But UFO proponents are dissatisfied with explanations for the first sighting and the FAA's final conclusions. Many continue to believe there is a "cover-up" of sensitive information.

"The only explanations I've seen — that it was Jupiter or Mars — are ludicrous," said Stanton Friedman, a Canadian nuclear physicist and lecturer on the subject of UFOs.

"What about the military ob-

servations? That information is always classified, but I would bet they exist," he said. "The fact that the FAA doesn't have support really means very little. Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence."

Steucke said he knew of "no military studies whatsoever" of the UFO incident.

"Basically, the military told me there were three things they could say about it: One is that the radar image their own radar picked up was cluttered, two is that they didn't scramble any signals, and three is that they weren't going to investigate it in any way," Steucke said.

FAA transcripts released show such things as communications interference between the JAL plane and air traffic control.

Dale Goudie of the Puget Sound Aerial Phenomena Re-

## isn't sure

search Center in Seattle said that such interference would not be inconsistent with the thousands of UFO reports he has received. Such reports describe car motors going dead, radios abruptly turning off and other "electromagnetic disturbances" coinciding with UFO sightings, he said.

"We have 60,000 reports of electromagnetic disturbance effects, and we keep adding them," Goudie said. "It's true that we don't understand all the atmospheric conditions in Alaska, but it's also true that UFOs have ever knocked out military base radar. This stuff really does happen."

But Steucke and other technicians say that atmospheric conditions near the Arctic Circle, combined with the distance between the control tower and the plane would more than explain the stati-