

ARRIVING FROM MARS BY UFO?

In recent years there have been many reports of unidentified flying objects (UFO's), especially since the first Soviet Sputnik went up on October 4, 1957. From time to time the question has been raised as to whether the UFO's might have come from Mars or Venus, perhaps bearing intelligent beings. Usually the answer to this question has been simply a guess which depended to a considerable extent on what the individual wanted to believe. Most scientists have been inclined to doubt that the UFO's came from Mars or Venus, preferring to credit the sightings to natural phenomena which are not as well known as they should be.

There is a logical approach to this question as to whether or not UFO's have come from Mars (or Venus). It is well known that if some one on the earth wants to send a space vehicle to Mars or Venus, there are specific favorable times when such a body can be launched so that it will travel along a minimum-energy orbit, arriving at the path of Mars (or Venus) just as that planet comes to the same point. For example, favorable times for launching a rocket to travel to Venus have been listed as Oct 27, 1965, June 5, 1967 and January 11, 1969, and for Mars, November 25, 1964, January 26, 1967 and February 25, 1969. (SPACE HANDBOOK, Don't Printing Office 1959)

Of course, there are similar favorable times for launching a space vehicle from Mars (or Venus) to the earth, and for each of these launching times, there would be a corresponding arrival time at the earth. These favorable arrival times come at intervals of about 506 days for Venus and about 780 days for Mars. Actually, in each case, the interval is a close approximation to the synodic period of the planet; for Venus, the synodic period varies from 583.8 to 581.8 days, and for Mars, from 779 to 783 days.

One could then choose intervals of 20 days, say ten days on either side of a favorable arrival date, and look to see how many UFO's were sighted in each such "favorable arrival interval", here named F_n (plural F_n 's). If there were to increase in the number of UFO's in these F_n 's, then it would be unlikely that any appreciable number of UFO's had been arriving from Mars or Venus.

Some one may object to raise the question as to whether or not a Martian or a Venusian would elect to travel in a minimum-energy orbit. Here I shall assume that intelligent beings from any part of the universe will choose to travel by means and paths that will minimize the expenditure of energy.

This F_n approach to the problem can be carried a step further. One can make a list of the UFO's observed in the F_n 's, and look at the record of each to see if the UFO was observed travelling in the direction it would have if it came from Mars (or Venus) in a minimum-energy orbit.