

UNCLASSIFIED  
CONFIDENTIAL

part of the reporting agency. All cases where there is only a single observer, unless his or her reliability is unquestionable, are put in this category.

## C. Aircraft

This category of reports varies from those reports of objects that were definitely proven to be aircraft to those that were possibly aircraft. In evaluating reports as aircraft, a great deal of importance is put on any comments by the reporting officer about local air traffic. Another criterion is the elevation of the reported object. It has been found that if an observer sees an aircraft above a 60° angle from the horizon and is in a relatively quiet location, he can hear the sound of the aircraft. Thus all reports of moving lights at night or "ship" objects in the daytime, moving at moderately fast speeds (i.e., in view for 1-5 minutes), and observed below 60° could be aircraft and are evaluated as aircraft. Conversely, any object that passes directly over, or within 30° of the zenith of an observer, at moderately fast speeds and if no sound is heard, is not likely to be an aircraft.

## D. Balloons

Several criteria are used to determine whether a reported object was or possibly was a balloon. Objects that are reported to hover or move very slowly could be balloons. In this type of report, the time is checked. All weather balloons in the United States are launched at 0300Z, 0900Z, 1500Z and 2100Z. If an object is reported near a balloon launch site within an hour after these scheduled launch times, it is checked as a balloon. If the object is moving and a track is reported, the track is checked against winds aloft for that area. If the reported movement is with the wind at any altitude, the object could be a balloon. Many balloons are tracked by radio and radar and in these cases, the actual track of the balloon can be correlated with the data obtained from the observers.

The possibility of observers seeing balloons that have developed slow leaks and have drifted long distances is always present. In cases where the description of the object is identical to that of a balloon and yet no balloon can be positively determined as having been in that area, the report is evaluated as possibly a balloon on the chance that a balloon has become "lost" and has drifted into the area.

## E. Astronomical

Reports in this category are those that are proven to be or are similar in all respects to known astronomical bodies such as meteors, fireballs, planets, or stars. The estimated azimuth and elevation of a reported object and the time of the observation can be checked to determine the known location of astronomical bodies. In some cases, this is done by project personnel and in more difficult cases by an astronomer.

UNCLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

T  
H  
I  
S  
  
P  
A  
C  
E  
  
I  
S  
  
U  
N  
C  
L  
A  
S  
S  
I  
F  
I  
E  
D