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Canal Zone

25-26 November 1959

I. Description of Incident

From 1800Z to 2340Z on 25 November 1959, two unidentified objects were tracked on gun-laying radar. The objects flew at an estimated speed of 275 knots and varied altitude between 1,000' and 26,000'. The area was put on a yellow alert after all known air traffic had been checked. Four aircraft were scrambled for visual search, but had no success.

At one time, 2330Z, an AF major observed a glowing yellow light traveling rapidly from east to west near France AFB. At the time of this visual sighting, the radar had the target in the France AFB area. Other reports of visual sightings were received, however, further investigation showed these to be the aircraft that had been scrambled for the attempted intercept.

Weather showed two inversion layers in the area, but the report states the possibility of weather causing the targets was checked before the yellow alert was called.

II. Discussion of Incident

Although the report on this incident is complete, there is still not enough data to make a complete analysis. The fact that inversions were noted raises the possibility of weather phenomena causing the targets.

III. Conclusion

Radar returns probably due to weather.

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