

**SECRET**  
UNCLASSIFIED

Seattle, Washington

5 February 1953

I. Description of Incident

A B-36 aircraft was in flight in the vicinity of Spokane, Washington, when one round white omnidirectional light was sighted at 0913Z. The light was at an altitude of approximately 7,000 ft. on a southeast course circling and rising as it proceeded. It was visually observed for a period of three to five minutes. The B-36 made 180° descending turns toward the light which was estimated to be moving at a speed of 150 to 200 knots. The aircraft was inbound to Spokane 25 miles out and located near Seattle, Washington.

II. Distribution of Incident

ATTC determined that a scheduled pilot balloon released at 0900Z from the U.S. Weather Bureau Station at Fairchild AFB was in the immediate area of sighting. The sighting was from Seattle which is 12.5 nautical miles S.W. of Fairchild AFB and to place a balloon in the area of the sighting winds would have to be out of the S.W. Winds aloft at 7,000 to 30,000 ft. were from 270° to 280° at 50 knots per hour. Therefore, by computation, it would take approximately 25 minutes for the balloon to be carried to Spokane by the existing winds. Since the unidentified object was sighted 13 minutes after the balloon launch time, and the description (altitude, orbiting, balloons heavy white rounded light) closely parallels the maneuver of a balloon, ATTC concluded that the object probably was the pilot balloon. All local air fields were checked by McChord AFB and no aircraft were in the area at the time of observation other than the B-36.

III. Conclusion

Probably balloon.

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