

SUDDEN "PLAGUE OF SAUCERS"

They're not from Mars or Moscow; they're not even dangerous, says U.S. Air Force . . . But it's keen to know what's behind this . . .

Herald Special Service

NEW YORK, Tues. — So many "flying saucers" have suddenly been reported "zooming" over Washington that the story of the hunt for them reads like a science fiction thriller.

The U.S. Air Force has asked its physicists to help solve the latest mystery. It says it will give the matter "adequate but not frantic attention."

Between 1.30 a.m. and 5 a.m. today, Civil Aeronautics Administration radar operators at Washington reported scores of sightings of mysterious objects—as many as 12 on the radar screen at once. But an airliner directed toward one sighting

... saw nothing.

They appeared to be travelling at from 90 to 100 mph in a 15-mile-long area. The radar operators did not give their exact altitude.

Air Force officers insist there is no military secret about their quest for information about the "saucers."

The Air Force sees these possibilities behind the latest "plague":—

... they are some kind of physical phenomena —

They are strips of aluminium foil released over Canada during a recent test of air defences there;

They are meteorological balloons many miles up—possible but not probable, the Air Force says, because it should know about the release of the balloons.

But the Air Force has dropped its earlier attitude that the so-called saucers—whatever they are—do

me... the likeliest bet;

not exist.

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to jet fighters were set up to investigate last night's mystery.

The Air Defence Command said: "We were too busy with other things, besides those things we not hurting anybody."

Earlier last night an Air Force spokesman had said a fighter aircraft had been placed on a 24-hour alert to investigate any unusual aerial objects.

Last night's "saucers" were reported in the same way as that in which a pilot last Saturday reported sighting "steady lights," but his 600 aircraft could not see in on them.

Washington today, at a press conference, Major-General John Samford, Director of Air Force Intelligence, said: "Six years' analysis of mysterious objects sightings have revealed no pattern that shows anything remotely consistent with any menace to the United States."

The conference was held specifically to answer questions from the world's newspapers about recent alarms of unexplained radar other sightings. Samford said be-

tween 1000 and 2000 reports had been studied by Air Force investigators. Fewer than 20 per cent. of the reported aerial objects remained unidentified.

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These were unidentified mainly from lack of information by the "saucer" spotters.

General Samford said his personal opinion was that the unexplained "blips" of light appearing on radarscopes at Washington airport were caused by temperature inversions.

He and another spokesman explained that radar disturbances could be caused by sudden changes in temperature.

Most of the saucers reported in the past five years had turned out to be friendly aircraft, hoaxes, or meteorological or electronic

Dr. I. M. Levitt, Director of Fels Planetarium, at Philadelphia, said jet pilots had seen "mysterious objects" over Washington because of the extremely hot weather.

He said weather conditions that caused optical mirages caused radar and television mirages as well.

"The objects will disappear as soon as weather conditions over Washington change," he said.