

## Jet Interceptors Disarmed by UFO

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Tehran, Iran, September 19, 1976

After midnight on September 19, 1976, above Tehran, Iran, two successive F-4 interceptors attempted to catch a radar-visual UFO that had been widely reported by civilians. Each time visual contact was made, and the crew attempted to arm a missile and prepare to fire it, the weapons system electronics failed.

The incident was first brought to light by the leak of a Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) evaluation report to NICAP in 1976. A three-page Department of Defense (DOD) teletype message on the case was obtained by Charles Huffer in 1977 under the Freedom of Information Act. Attached to the message was a copy of the DIA evaluation report. The main features of the message are paraphrased here, with quoted excerpts.

At about 12:30 a.m. the Air Force Command Post received citizens' calls about a glowing object in the sky. Subsequent sightings of a bright glowing object led them to scramble an F-4 "Phantom" jet from Shahrokhi AFB to investigate. The F-4 was airborne at 1:30 a.m. and proceeded to a point 40 nautical miles north of Tehran. As the F-4 closed in on the object, all instrumentation and communications (both UHF and intercom) were lost. The pilot broke off the intercept and headed back to base.

"When the F-4 turned away from the object and apparently was no longer a threat to it, the aircraft regained all instrumentation and communications." A second F-4 was scrambled at 1:40 a.m. and the electronics officer acquired a radar lock-on at 27 nautical miles, 12 o'clock high position with the rate of closure at 150 knots. As the range decreased to 25 nautical miles, "the object moved away at a speed that was visible on the radar scope and stayed at 25 nautical miles."

The DOD message said that the size of the radar return was comparable to that of a 707 tanker, although its visual size was difficult to discern because of its intense brilliance. Witnesses saw flashing strobe lights arranged in a rectangular pattern and alternating blue, green, red, and orange in color. The sequence of the lights was so fast that all the colors could be seen at once.

As the pursuit continued, another brightly lighted object emerged from the first object and headed straight toward the F-4 like a missile, at a high rate of speed. The pilot attempted to fire an AIM-9 missile at the UFO, "but at that instant his weapons control panel went off and he lost all communications (UHF and interphone). At this point the pilot initiated a turn and negative-G dive to get away. As he turned the object fell in trail at what appeared to be about 3-4 nautical miles. As he continued in his turn away from the primary object the second object went to the inside of his turn then returned to the primary object for a perfect rejoin."

Shortly after the rendezvous and merging of the two objects another object emerged from the other side of the primary object and streaked straight down. The F-4 crew watched it approach the ground and expected to see an explosion, but instead it appeared to slow and land gently, brightly illuminating the terrain. The pilot descended to about 15,000 feet and continued to observe and mark the position of the landed object before returning to base. On the return flight they experienced some night vision problems that made the landing difficult.

At daylight the F-4 crew was taken to the landing site (a dry lake bed) in a helicopter, but nothing could be seen. As they circled around to the west they picked up a beeper signal. Seeing a small house at the point where the signal was strongest, they landed and questioned the inhabitants about whether they had noticed anything unusual the night before. The people talked about a loud noise and bright flash of light.

The DIA evaluation termed this "An outstanding report. This case is a classic which meets all the criteria necessary for a valid study of the UFO phenomenon." The analysis called the UFO performance "awesome,"

noting that the objects displayed "an inordinate amount of maneuverability." In 1997, Richard Hall tracked down the author of the DIA report and interviewed him by telephone. At that time, he expressed a willingness to testify to a Congressional committee on what he knew about the case.

(DIA Defense Information Evaluation Report, IR No. 6846013976, 22 Sept 1976, by Maj. Roland B. Evans, USAF, Military Capability Analyst. The text of the teletype report to the Pentagon and other Federal agencies appears in International UFO Reporter, January 1978, pp. 6-7. See also Tehran Journal, September 20, 1976.)