AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

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8. Radar contact with unidentified object; by Patrol Squadron #6, (P2V-3W) in the Northern Sea of Japan, 21 August 1951.

a. Extracted from letter from Commander Naval Forces Far East, to the Chief of Naval Operations, 29 September 1951:

Unusual radar targets were reported in the log of a P2V-3W of Patrol Squadron 6, 21 August 1951, while on a routine shipping surveillance flight in the Sea of Japan. The aircraft was at 41°55'N-133°52'E, at 1205 hours "K" time, 3000 feet altitude, when a target appeared astern of the plane on the radar scope.

In an attempt to make visual contact, the plane was turned sharply toward the target several times, but each time the course was reversed thetarget would either appear on the beam or remain astern. The target would remain on the scope for a few sweeps, then disappear and reappear on another portion of the scope but never forward of the beam. The range from the target to the aircraft varied between 3 and 7 miles throughout the period of contact. Although all flight crew attempted to make visual contact, none were able to do so. This might be accounted for by the fact that visibility was reported to be 3 to 5 miles due to haze. Qualified personnel, including squadron electronic officer, viewed the scope and identified the target as authentic and distinct from sea return. The target caused a strong presentation on the scope throughout the contact and was capable of being sector scanned by the operator. After 45 minutes the patrol was continued. Upon leaving the area the target was not seen again.

The aircraft radar equipment was an AN/APS-20 and the antenna had fixed tilt of plus 2°. Radar equipment was operating very satisfactorily before and after leaving the area.

When the target was observed, the radar camera was turned on and operated continuously. (The film quality was poor and revealed no additional information.) The target was viewed by the operator on the 0-10 mile range setting; however the camera operated on a different scope with a minimum range scale of 50 miles. The sea return on the 50 mile setting was sufficient to obliterate all targets within the 10 mile radius.

The cause of this phenomena cannot be evaluated from the information available. Possible explanations are malfunctioning of the equipment and enemy spoofing.

COMMENT: The fact that the aircraft tried unsuccessfully for 45 minutes to bring the target forward indicates possible enemy spoofing. The plots disappearing and reappearing could hardly be due to a normal aircraft or missile, despite the close interference due to the sea return.

(EVALUATION: B-6)

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