PROJECT 12073 RECORD CARD

1. DATE 23 September 1951	LOCATION LONG BEACH [redacted], California	12. CONCLUSIONS ☒ Was Balloon ☐ Probably Balloon ☐ Possibly Balloon ☐ Was Aircraft ☐ Probably Aircraft ☐ Possibly Aircraft ☐ Was Astronomical ☐ Probably Astronomical ☐ Possibly Astronomical ☐ Other ☐ Insufficient Data for Evaluation ☐ Unknown
3. DATE-TIME GROUP Local 0755PDST GMT	4. TYPE OF OBSERVATION ☐ Ground-Visual ☐ Ground-Radar ☒ Air-Visual ☐ Air-Intercept Radar	
5. PHOTOS ☐ Yes ☒ No	6. SOURCE F-86 Pilots	
7. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION Not Reported	8. NUMBER OF OBJECTS 1	9. COURSE

10. BRIEF SUMMARY OF SIGHTING

Shape was round. Color was silver. It is believed the pilots saw a radiosonde balloon.

SEE CASE FILE

11. COMMENTS

Evaluated as a balloon.

AIC FORM 329 (REV 26 SEP 52)

Appendix VII

MARCH AFB - 23 September 1951

On 23 September 1951 at 0810 PST, an unidentified object was sighted over Long Beach, California. Four F-86 aircraft were scrambled and the object was sighted by them over Muroc, California. On attaining an altitude of 42,000 ft. the F-86's reported the object to be orbitting March AFB at an estimated altitude of between 50,000 ft. and 55,000 ft. The object appeared to be a swept wing, fighter type aircraft.

Weather

Unavailable at this time.

Status of Investigation

Radiosonde balloons were released from San Diego, Long Beach and Santa Maria, California at approximately 0700 PST. All of these weather stations were checked by OSI personnel and although the balloons were released all weather station personnel stated that it would be very doubtful if their balloons would have traveled the course that the object traveled.

All of the major aircraft factories and installations conducting experimental flight tests were contacted. No experimental aircraft airborne at the time of the sighting.

Additional information has been requested as to additional details of the incident such as times and locations during the attempted interception by the F-86's and other possible balloon launchings.

[redacted]

Status Report No 2

UNCLASSIFIED

Appendix IV

MARCH AIR FORCE BASE - 23 September 1951

I. DISCUSSION OF INCIDENT

The first report of this incident, which appeared in Status Report No. 1, proved to be incomplete and misleading. Further investigation has corrected the discrepencies and the following account of the incident is considered to be accurate.

At approximately 0700 PDST, two F-86 aircraft were scrambled from George Air Force Base, California, on a routine mission. The flight was vectored to 118° 40'W - 33° 50'N by GCI. (See inclosed overlay.) The flight orbitted the position and took up a heading toward Long Beach Radio. At approximately 0755 PDST the flight reported to GCI that they observed an unidentified object high at 12 o'clock. The flight was 30 seconds out of Long Beach Radio at this time. The object appeared to be in a left orbit at about 50,000 ft. The object could not be picked up by the ground radar, however, visual contact was maintained. The object continued a left orbit and passed over the two aircraft. Attempts were made by the F-86's to identify the object but they were unsuccessful due to the altitude of the object and a fuel shortage. At approximately 0810 or 0815 the flight was released by the ground controller and they returned to George Air Force Base. The object appeared to be an aircraft with 45° swept wings and bright silver in color. When last seen the object was in a left orbit, or circling to the left. The pilot's opinion was that it was a swept wing type aircraft.

At approximately 0800 PDST four additional F-86 aircraft were scrambled from George AFB to relieve the two above mentioned F-86's. The four aircraft split into two, two-ship elements, denoted as Flight 2-A and 2-B on the inclosed overlay. Flight 2-A was vectored to a position at 117° 30'W and 30° 30'N. They arrived at this position at approximately 0810 and sighted the object high at 1: o'clock at what appeared to be over Muroc AFB. A steady climb was made to 43,000 ft. and the object was found to be near March AFB. The object appeared to be in a controlled orbit to the right and left at 50,000 to 55,000 ft. The two aircraft stayed in the area for 10-15 minutes before breaking off the intercept due to a fuel shortage and landed at 0845 PDST. The object appeared to be a swept wing aircraft.

The second element of the group, noted as Flight 2-B on the overlay, observed the object soon after take-off. The object appeared to be going south. The flight made a series of climbing turns under the object as they climbed to 47,500 ft. The object was in a wide right turn. At approximately 0905 PDST the aircraft broke off the attempted intercept and returned to their base. This flight reported that the object appeared to be round and silver.

No more intercepts were attempted. At no time was the object observed on the radar screen nor was it reported to be observed visually from the ground. The F-86's, however, were contin ally tracked by radar.

UNCLASSIFIED

[redacted]

The F-86's were unable to climb to the estimated altitude of the object due to the fact that they were carrying external fuel tanks and elected not to jettison them.

II. STATUS OF INVESTIGATION

At 0700 PDST a radiosonde balloon was released from the Long Beach Municipal Airport. This balloon was lost at 0743 PDST, eight miles from the airport on a bearing of 95° true, due to a malfunction of the tracking equipment. (See Point A on overlay.) At this time the balloon would have been at approximately 40,000 ft. The winds above 40,000 ft. are unknown but it is logical to assume that at this altitude they will be relatively constant in direction. Assuming a relative constant direction of 270° and an average velocity of 30 knots above 40,000 ft. (the wind at 40,000 ft. was 280° at 21 knots) the possible flight path of the balloon can be plotted on the overlay.

The original sighting by Flight 1 could very possibly have been the balloon as their heading was toward Long Beach Airport. The altitude of the F-86's at the time of the sighting is unknown but was probably below 40,000 ft. At 0754, the time of the original sighting, the balloon would be at 50,000 to 55,000 ft. and approximately ten miles directly ahead of the two aircraft. The apparent orbitting of the balloon cannot be explained. The balloon would make a gradual turn due to wind shifts but these are so gradual that it is doubtful if the movement would be apparent from an aircraft as fast as an F-86.

Referring to the ground track of Flight 2-A, if a 30 knot wind at 270° is assumed, at 0810, the approximate time the F-86's sighted the object from a 355° TC, the balloon would be at B on the overlay. The balloon would probably be at an altitude of 60,000 ft. and nearly straight ahead of the aircraft. Due to the size of the balloon, the distance could have been misjudged and the balloon could have appeared to be near three. Once again the orbitting of the object cannot be explained.

The attempted intercept by Flight 2-B cannot be explained. If the ground track given by the leader of Flight 2-B is correct it is very doubtful that the flight was observing a balloon. The time that they sighted the object is not known but if it is assumed that they flew beneath the object for 20 minutes, it is highly doubtful that a wind shift of nearly 360° could occur above 60,000 ft. to give the illusion of a turn.

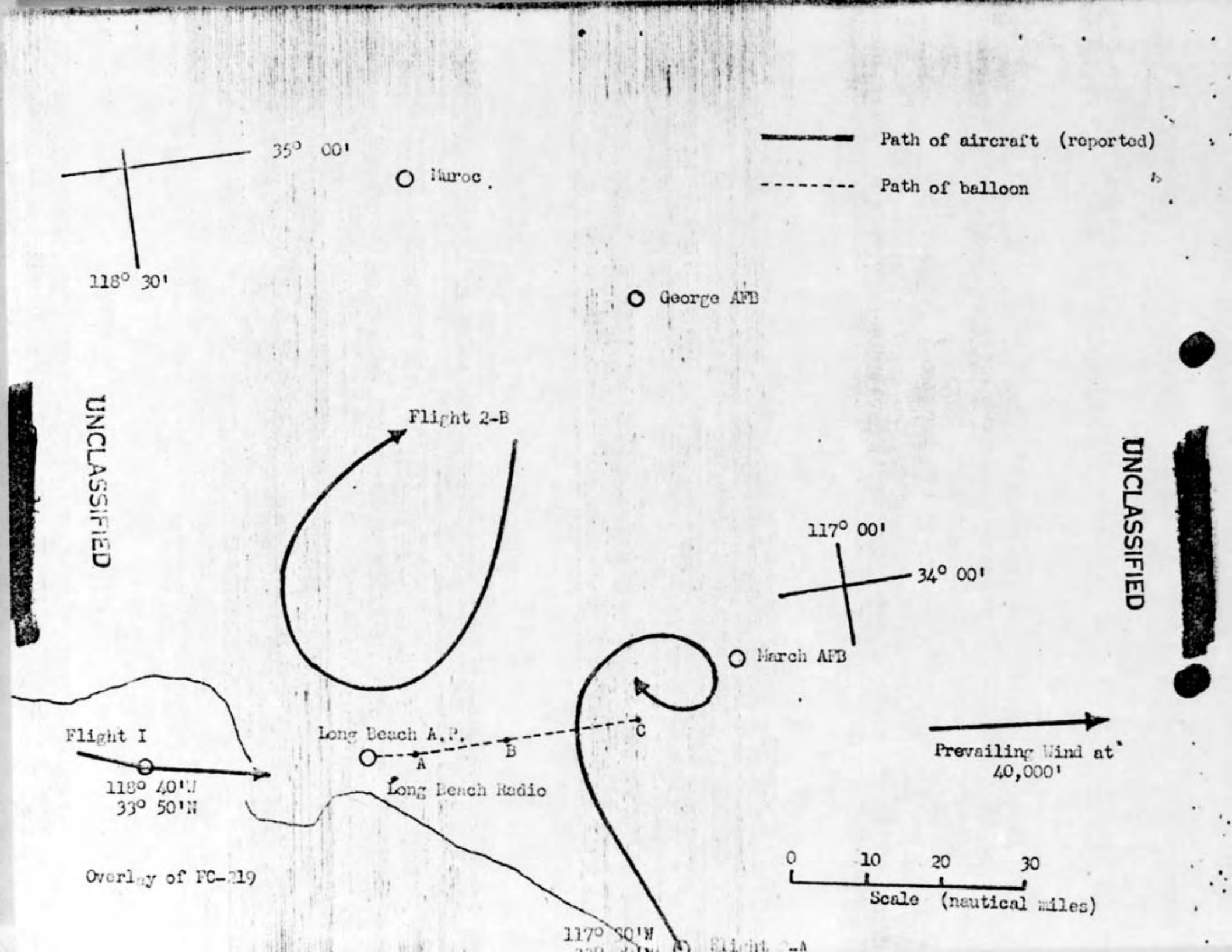
The possibility of this object being an experimental aircraft from some southern California aircraft plant, naval airfield, or from Edwards Air Force Base was checked with negative results. No other balloons were released in the vicinity.

III. CONCLUSIONS

With the information available, it cannot be concluded that the object was definitely the radiosonde balloon released from Long Beach Municipal Airport. However, since the balloon was near the flight path of two of the F-86 elements, and assuming that the orbitting of the object was an illusion due to the relative motion between the balloon and the aircraft, it can be concluded that the unidentifi object was very possibly a radiosonde balloon.

The third attempted intercept, the one in which the object was followed in a wide turn, cannot be explained.

It is not believed that further interrogation would produce any additional significant details due to the fact that some of the personnel involved have been transferred overseas and due to the time since the incident.


Path of aircraft (reported)
Path of balloon
35° 00'
Nuroc
118° 30'
George AFB
UNCLASSIFIED
Flight 2-B
117° 00'
34° 00'
March AFB
UNCLASSIFIED
Flight I
Long Beach A.P.
A
B
C
Prevailing Wind at 40,000'
118° 40'W
33° 50'N
Long Beach Radio
Overlay of FC-219
0
10
20
30
Scale (nautical miles)
117° 30'W
Flight 2-A

15 SODEMAN Case Files

TD-E/Lt Col Friend

Request for UFO Information (Buzz Sodeman) 17 MAY 1962

Hq USAF
SAFOI-3b (Major Hart)
Wash 25 DC

1. The attached letter from Mr. Buzz Sodeman requests information regarding 14 sightings of unidentified aerial phenomena.

2. The following information regarding the sightings referenced in Mr. Sodeman's letter is provided to assist you in preparing an answer to him. The order of the information corresponds to that presented in the letter.

3. The Laredo AFB, Texas, sighting which occurred on 4 December 1952 was evaluated as an aircraft sighting.

4. At 1446 on 22 July 1952 the weather observer of the local airport at Uvalde, Texas, sighted an object which he described as being large and round, but displaying no aerodynamic features. The object was reported to be silver in color and estimated as 50 feet in diameter and to be at an altitude of 20,000 feet. The observer estimated the objects speed as in excess of 1000 mph. The object traveled from east at approximately 40° elevation to the southwest. The movement was described as gyrating and the object was in sight for 45 seconds. The object seemed to be climbing and disappeared behind a large cumulus cloud. The observer was not aware of any sound. This case is classed as unidentified in the [redacted] files. However, it should be noted that an object at 20,000 feet which made an angle of approximately 90° in 45 seconds would have a speed of approximately 590 knots. If the object were at 3000 feet or closer to the cloud base, it would have a speed of only 80 knots. The available information is not sufficient to allow a significant solution to this case, but it is highly probable that the misidentification of a conventional object was the cause for this sighting.

5. [redacted] California, to investigate an unidentified flying object. Operation was successful and the object identified as a weather balloon.

6. On 3 August 1957 at 1615 PST two objects were observed with binoculars from Hamilton AFB, California. The objects were observed for [redacted] minutes and were described as circular or globular in shape and silver in color. They were estimated to be 60-100 feet in diameter and possessing speeds of 400-450 mph. The objects were estimated to be at 12,000 and 18,000 feet. The object at 18,000 feet was reported to have dived at the lower object and maneuvered much the same as a fighter during a dog fight. During

OFFICIAL FILE COPY

20 April 1952

Dear Sirs,

I would like to know without any complications in your work, if I could have the following information on these Flying Saucers Sighting cases: The Laredo Air Force Base, Tex., December 4, 1951; also the Uvalde, Tex. case on July 22, 1952; and the cases on the sightings at March Air Force Base, Calif., on Oct. 23, 1951; and the Hamilton Air Force Base, Calif., Aug. 3, 1952; in the south the cases or rather case at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., on July 18, 1952. In the north the cases at Goose Bay Air Force Base, Labrador on Dec. 15, 1952; at Aircraft and Warnings Station in Michigan on July 29, 1952; and at or rather in the area of Northern Michigan on Nov. 24, 1951. And the foreign sightings at Japan on Dec. 29, 1952; and on Apr. 19, 1952; in the Azores on Sept. 26, 1952; the Truk Island Sighting on Feb. [illegible]; [illegible] the Korean area sighting on Feb. 7, 1953; and [illegible] sighting Feb. 11, 1953. I would like [illegible] cases because I am and [illegible] been convinced by my History [illegible] that they are [illegible] very much.

Yours truly,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

P.S. Sirs I would also like to know if I could have the form's that one must sign after he has seen an "Unidentified Flying Object's". Thank you.

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UNCLASSIFIED

Appendix IV

MARCH AIR FORCE BASE - 23 September 1952

I. DISCUSSION OF INCIDENT

The first report of this incident, which appeared in Status Report No. 1, proved to be incomplete and misleading. Further investigation has corrected the discrepencies and the following account of the incident is considered to be accurate.

At approximately 0700 PDST, two F-86 aircraft were scrambled from George Air Force Base, California, on a routine mission. The flight was vectored to 115° 40'W - 33° 50'N by GCI. (See inclosed overlay.) The flight orbitted the position and took up a heading toward Long Beach Radio. At approximately 0715 PDST the flight reported to GCI that they observed an unidentified object high at 12 o'clock. The flight was 30 seconds out of Long Beach Radio at this time. The object appeared to be in a left orbit at about 50,000 ft. The object could not be picked up by the ground radar, however, visual contact was maintained. The object continued a left orbit and passed over the two aircraft. Attempts were made by the F-86's to identify the object but they were unsuccessful due to the altitude of the object and a fuel shortage. At approximately 0810 or 0815 the flight was released by the ground controller and they returned to George Air Force Base. The object appeared to be an aircraft with 45° swept wings and bright silver in color. When last seen the object was in a left orbit, or circling to the left. The pilot's opinion was that it was a swept wing type aircraft.

At approximately 0800 PDST four additional F-86 aircraft were scrambled from George AFB to relieve the two above mentioned F-86's. The four aircraft split into two, two-ship elements, denoted as Flight 2-A and 2-B on the inclosed overlay. Flight 2-A was vectored to a position at 117° 30'. and 30° 30'N. They arrived at this position at approximately 0810 and sighted the object high at 1 o'clock at what appeared to be over Muroc AFB. A steady climb was made to 43,000 ft. and the object was found to be near March AFB. The object appeared to be in a controlled orbit to the right and left at 50,000 to 55,000 ft. The two aircraft stayed in the area for 10-15 minutes before breaking off the intercept due to a fuel shortage and landed at 0845 PDST. The object appeared to be a swept wing aircraft.

The second element of the group, noted as Flight 2-B on the overlay, observed the object soon after take-off. The object appeared to be going south. The flight made a series of climbing turns under the object as they climbed to 47,500 ft. The object was in a wide right turn. At approximately 0915 PDST the aircraft broke off the attempted intercept and returned to their base. This flight reported that the object appeared to be round and silver.

No more intercepts were attempted. At no time was the object observed on the radar screen nor was it reported to be observed visually from the ground. The F-86's, however, were contin ally tracked by radar.

The F-86's were unable to climb to the estimated altitude of the object due to the fact that they were carrying external fuel tanks and elected not to jettison them.

II. STATUS OF INVESTIGATION

At 0700 PST a radiosonde balloon was released from the Long Beach Municipal Airport. This balloon was lost at 0747 PST, eight miles from the airport on a bearing of 95° true, due to a malfunction of the tracking equipment. (See point A on overlay.) At this time the balloon would have been at approximately 40,000 ft. The winds above 40,000 ft. are unknown but it is logical to assume that at this altitude they will be relatively constant in direction. Assuming a relative constant direction of 270° and an average velocity of 30 knots above 4 ,000 ft. (the wind at 40,000 ft. was 280° at 1 knots) the possible flight path of the balloon can be plotted on the overlay.

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The possibility of this object being an experimental aircraft from some southern California aircraft plant, naval airfield, or from Edwards Air Force Base was checked with negative results. No other balloons were released in the vicinity.

III. CONCLUSIONS

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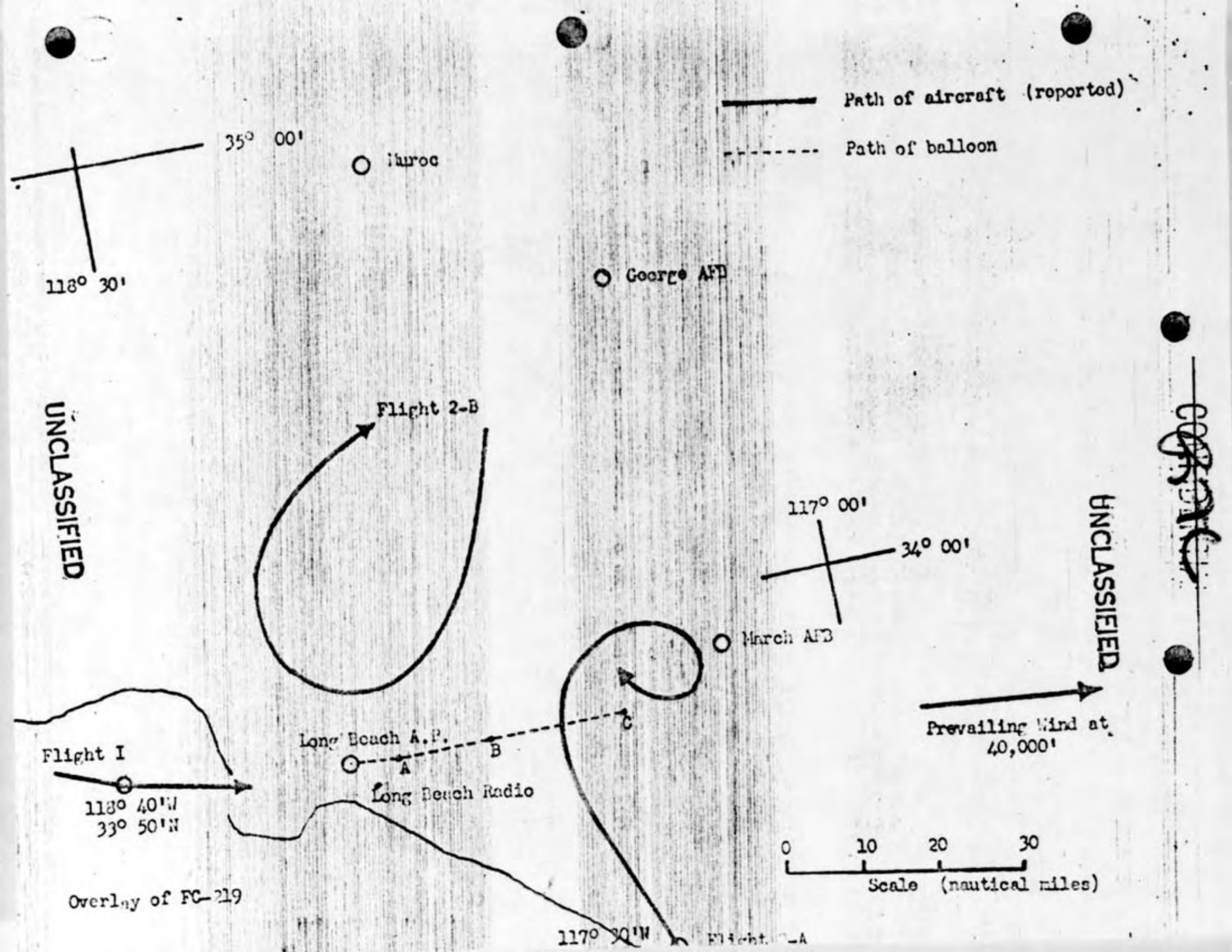
Path of aircraft (reported)
Path of balloon
35° 00'
Muroc
118° 30'
George AFB
UNCLASSIFIED
Flight 2-B
117° 00'
34° 00'
March AFB
UNCLASSIFIED
Prevailing Wind at 40,000'
Flight I
118° 40'W
33° 50'N
Long Beach A.P.
A
B
C
Long Beach Radio
0 10 20 30
Scale (nautical miles)
Overlay of FC-219
117° 30'W

Appendix VII

MARCH AFB - 23 September 1951

On 23 September 1951 at 0210 PST, an unidentified object was sighted over Long Beach, California. Four F-86 aircraft were scrambled and the object was sighted by them over Muroc, California. On attaining an altitude of 43,000 ft. the F-86's reported the object to be orbitting March AFB at an estimated altitude of between 50,000 ft. and 55,000 ft. The object appeared to be a sweot wing, fighter type aircraft.

Weather

Unavailable at this time.

Status of Investigation

Radiosonde balloons were released from San Diego, Long Beach and Santa Maria, California at approximately 0700 PST. All of these weather stations were checked by OSI personnel and although the balloons were released all weather station personnel stated that it would be very doubtful if their balloons would have traveled the course that the object traveled.

All of the major aircraft factories and installations conducting experimental flight tests were contacted. No experimental aircraft airborne at the time of the sighting.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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A	Intellengence Report dated 5 Oct 1951 (S)
B	OSI Report dated 30 Oct 1951 (S)
C	Reinterrogation of Pilot dated 11 Dec 1951 (S)
D	Balloon Data, 4 December 1951
E	MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE (S)

AE FORM 112—PART I
APPROVED 1 JUNE 1948

[redacted] UNCLASSIFIED

[redacted] 10/07
By Auth CG 27th Air Div (Def)

COUNTRY	REPORT NO.	(LEAVE BLANK)
USA	1	

AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

SUBJECT: High Flying Unidentified Object

AREA REPORTED ON	FROM (Agency)
Long Beach, Muroc, and March Air Force Base, California	CG 27th Air Division (Def), Norton AFB, Calif.

DATE OF REPORT	DATE OF INFORMATION	EVALUATION
5 October 1951	23 September 1951	F-6

PREPARED BY (Officer): William F. White
1st Lt. William F. WHITE, Director of Intelligence

SOURCE: Report to CG, 27th Air Div from Controllers, ADCC and 669th AC&W Squadron

REFERENCES (Control number, directive, previous report, etc., as applicable):
ADC Letter 200-1, dated 11 April 1951 and TWX from CG 27th Air Div (Def)-Norton AFB-Calif dated 25 September 1951.

SUMMARY: (Enter concise summary of report. Give significance in final one-sentence paragraph. List inclosures at lower left. Begin text of report on AF Form 112—Part II.)

0710 PST

At 1610Z, 23 September 1951, an object was sighted and reported over Long Beach, California, at 50,000 feet. Four (4) F-86 were dispatched to investigate and sighted object over Muroc, California. Attaining an altitude of 43,000 feet, F-86 sighted object to be in a constant orbit in the vicinity of March Air Force Base, California, at an altitude between 50,000 feet and 55,000 feet. Object appeared to be a swept-wing, fighter-type aircraft.

Santa Maria, San Diego and Long Beach are regularly scheduled to release weather balloons which can easily rise to 50,000 feet, may have a kite attached that can give off reflection, and can expand greatly if they are 350 gram balloons.

0100 - 0600 - 1200 - 1900
0700 1300

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

[redacted] UNCLASSIFIED
(CLASSIFICATION)

[redacted]

[redacted]

(CLASSIFICATION)

GDW [redacted] 7/10/51
By Auth CG 27th Air Div (Def)

AF FORM 112—PART II
APPROVED 1 JUNE 1948

UNCLASSIFIED

AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

FROM (Agency)	REPORT NO.	
CG 27th Air Division (Def), Norton AFB, California	1	PAGE 2 OF 2 PAGES

The inclosed report was received by Captain J. R. STEELE, Chief Controller, ADCC, from Major LEO MELZER, Operations Officer, 750th AC&W Squadron. The report was read back and verified by Major MELZER.

Major MELZER checked Edwards AFB Flight Dispatcher and Control Tower Operator concerning aircraft from Edwards AFB in flight. No jet or conventional aircraft had taken off from Edwards AFB. The Operations Officer confirmed that no experimental aircraft to his knowledge were scheduled for flight. Edwards AFB Flight Dispatcher checked Nellis AFB, Inyokern, and George AFB Operations and reported that no flight had been airborne at the time that would approximate descriptions given.

Major MANUSSIER, CO of the 750th AC&W Squadron, asked General BOYD, OG of Edwards AFB, whether he knew of any flight to which General BOYD replied in the negative. General BOYD suggested that North American Company at Los Angeles International Airport be checked. Major MELZER checked Bell Aircraft, N.A.C.A., Douglas, North American and Northrup, but only an MP at Northrup answered any of these calls and reported that there had been no activity all morning. Bell has been experimenting with X-1 and X-5; N.A.C.A. with the XF-92; Douglas with the D 558; and Northrup with the X-3.

Edwards AFB Weather Station reported that Santa Maria, San Diego and Long Beach are regularly scheduled to release weather balloons which can easily rise to 50,000 feet and can expand "like a house" if they are 350 gram balloons. Balloons released by Santa Maria usually drift over Long Beach and Riverside, the flight that was reported as sighted. A kite may be attached to the balloon as a "sounding set" and may give off reflection.

Major MELZER also spoke to Captain HARVEY, one of the pilots who sighted the object (see inclosed statement), who stated the object appeared to be orbiting when he sighted it and not going "too fast." This was in the March AFB area.

UNCLASSIFIED

[redacted]

[illegible]