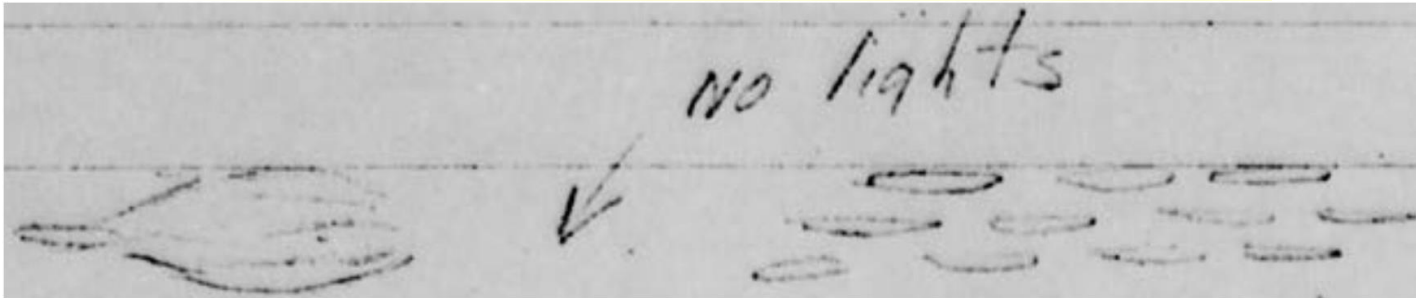
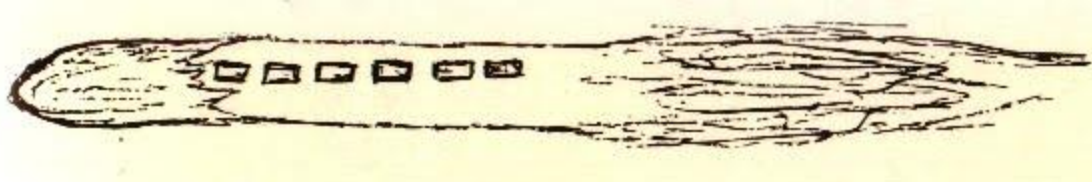


March 5, 1968 -- Zond-4



Fire Cone
Orange red
in color

Several individual lights with a white color
like Hg Vapor light. These lights
resembled windows in an aircraft at night.

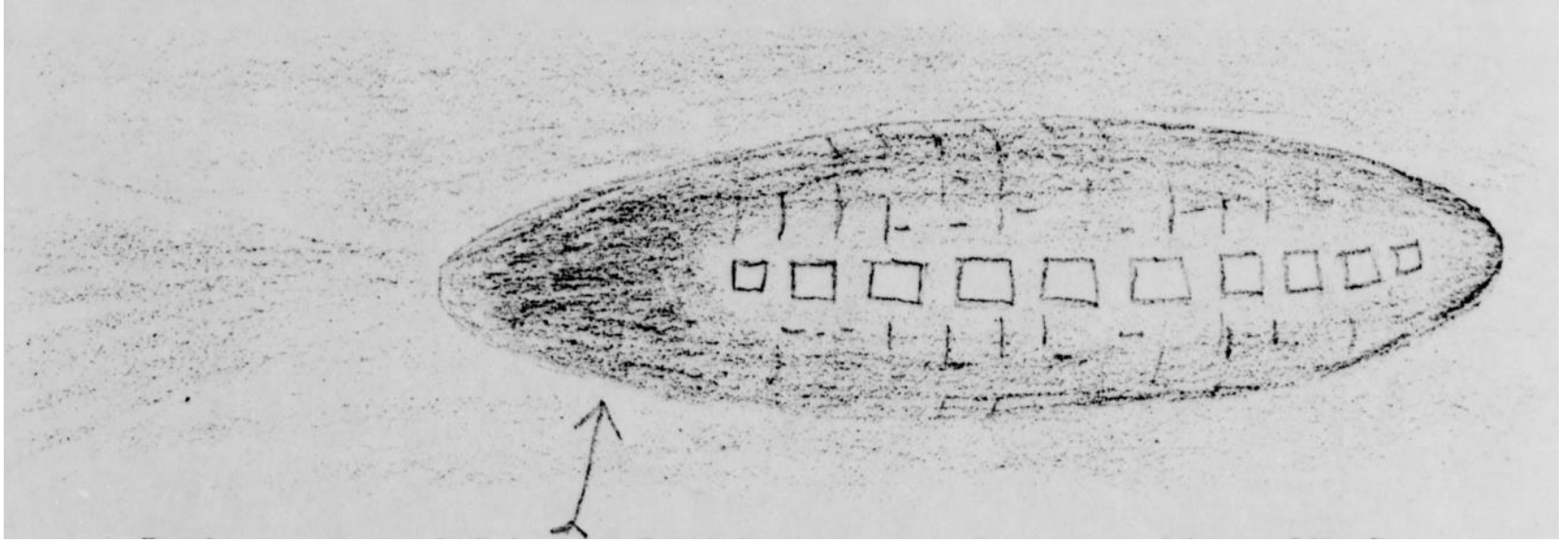
Eyewitness misperceptions under
direct gaze of the Condon Committee

William K. Hartmann

<http://files.ncas.org/condon/text/s6chap02.htm#S3>

- At about 9:45 p.m. EST on 3 March, hundreds of American observers near a line from Kentucky to Pennsylvania saw a majestic procession of fiery objects with sparkling golden orange tails move across their sky. The spacecraft was disintegrating upon re-entry. Most observers saw two or three main pieces, while observers near the end of the path saw more. These objects were soon identified by NORAD as pieces of the Zond IV probe or its rocket booster and this identification was finally confirmed 1 July 1968 (Sullivan, 1968).
- This case put us in the rare and fortunate position of knowing exactly what was involved even before we began to investigate the many UFO reports that were generated. In brief, many of these reports were quite good, but there is an admixture of spurious elements that are astonishingly familiar to students of the "flying saucer" literature. The latter vividly illustrate the problem of conception and interpretation, and shed light on the entire UFO phenomenon.
- It is scarcely short of amazing, and certainly suggestive, that the seemingly straightforward Zond IV incident produced a high percentage of the very phenomena that have puzzled students of the UFO problem. We have, in fact, reports of
 - a cigar-shaped object with windows and a flaming exhaust,
 - a vehicle or craft that passed low overhead in utter silence,
 - psycho-physiological response of dread, or in another case, an urge to sleep, and,
 - abnormal behavior of a nearby animal.

Henderson, Tennessee



“Also, I was more interested in looking into these windows than I was in studying window shapes. However, I feel strongly that the windows had definite symmetrical shapes, were clearly outlined as the craft passes by and were lined up in a row, horizontally. I feel safe to stress that the windows did not look blurred or fuzzy, but had clear, definite shapes. I observed, also, that the windows looked quite large – I would say larger than the windows we have in our planes.”

Shoals, Indiana 47581

9:45 P.M. I looked out the window and saw some kind of fire-colored object fly across the valley. About two or three minutes later my cousin, my aunt, and my uncle came running into the house yelling and trying to tell me about the UFO they saw. My cousin, aunt, uncle, and their neighbors, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] all observed it from horizon to horizon, which took but a very very short time. It was at about tree-top level and was seen very very clearly, and was just a few yards away. All of the observers saw a long jet airplane looking vehicle without any wings. It was on fire both in front and behind. All observers also saw many windows in the UFO. My cousin said, "If there had been anybody in the UFO near the windows I would have seen them." [REDACTED] who was standing on a tractor to get a better view of of it when it got far away saw it turn south. The UFO was estimated to be 175-200 feet in length. We called Bedford(Indiana) to the police station and it had already been reported on the outskirts of Bedford. We got in the car and drove to Bedford to the police station and some one else reported the had seen it turn south at Bedford and head for Salem (Indiana). Then the next morning we heard it was supposed to have been a meteor. But the other five observers and myself know the UFO was not a meteor because meteors don't have windows and don't turn corners like IT did. And it didn't make any noise what so ever. I believe what we saw was a FLYING SAUCER.

Hartmann selected witness statements #1

<http://files.ncas.org/condon/text/s6chap02.htm#S3>

- "[I heard on] news ... it was space junk. Never. It came down then went forward in perfect formation. So how can gravity be defied?"
- "Suggestions: 1. Cylinder type rocket with two thrust rocket engines and one rocket engine in front for guiding purposes. 2. Meteor broken into three main parts. 3. Space or aeronautical craft."
- "Observer does not think the objects were either satellite debris or meteors because they had a flat trajectory."
- "All ... observers saw a long jet airplane-looking vehicle without any wings. It was on fire both in front and behind. All observers also saw many windows ... If there had been anybody in the UFO near the windows I would have seen them."
- "It was shaped like a fat cigar, in my estimation ... It appeared to have rather square shaped windows along the side that was facing us ... It appeared to me that the fuselage was constructed of many pieced or flat sheets ... with a 'riveted together look' ... The many 'windows' seemed to be lit up from the inside."
- "[It could be compared to] 'ordinary saucer inverted without protrusion on top; elongated a little more than a saucer. Protrusion on bottom midline and about 50% of bottom so covered.'"
- "No flame was visible but ... quantity of golden sparks ... In my opinion it was a solid rocket type vehicle with three lights or three oval saucer type vehicles."
- "Object had red and blue lights."

Hartmann selected witness statements #2

<http://files.ncas.org/condon/text/s6chap02.htm#S3>

- "Observed an unidentified object ... It was long and narrow with a light in front and in back there was a streaming tail ... The object was dark black, trail was yellow gold."
- "They flew in a perfect military formation."
- When asked if they could be meteorites, [witness] replied, "It would be the first time I ever saw meteorites fly formation."
- "It appeared as if one object was in pursuit of the other. One object seemed to be traveling at a higher or greater speed than the one pursuing it. The pursuing object ... looked as if it was making an attempt to shoot the other one down."
- "It was at about treetop level and was seen very, very clearly, just a few yards away."
- "I really wanted to see a UFO. I remember saying aloud ... 'This is no natural phenomenon. It's really UFOs, I ... made an attempt to communicate with them. I had a flashlight ... [and] signaled ... in Morse code ... No visible response elicited ... After I came into the house I had an overpowering drive to sleep ... My dog ... went over between the two trash cans ... and whimpered and lay on the drive between the cans like she was frightened to death ... High frequency sound inaudible to us?"
- "Frightened my eleven year old son, who was out with his telescope."

“Processes of Perception, Conception, and Reporting” [Hartmann]

<http://files.ncas.org/condon/text/s6chap02.htm#S3>

- An effect important to the UFO problem is demonstrated by the records: the excited observers who thought they had witnessed a very strange phenomenon produced the most detailed, longest, and most misconceived reports, but those who by virtue of experience most nearly recognized the nature of the phenomenon became the least excited and produced the briefest reports.
- The "*excitedness effect*" has an important bearing on the UFO problem. It is a selection effect by which the least accurate reports are made more prominent (since the observer becomes highly motivated to make a report), while the most accurate reports may not be recorded.
- In the case of Zond IV the two most lengthy unsolicited reports described the apparition as a cigar-shaped craft with a row of lighted windows and a fiery tail, while the correct identifications as a re-entry were short, in some cases recovered only by later solicitation of reports.

Notes on object ID and map ID

- Molczan: “The 68013C plot includes two positions of the fireball estimated by Dr. Charles P. Olivier, of the American Meteor Society / Flower and Cook Observatory of the University of Pennsylvania.
- He based his estimates on several of the more precise observations that were reported. The Blue Book case file includes the correspondence between him and the USAF.
- As you can see, the estimated trajectory of 68013C passes close to those locations. 68013C was above the horizon of all of known locations from which the UFO was sighted, and its motion was in reasonable agreement with most of the descriptions.”
- Oberg: “After only hours of flight, NORAD had little opportunity to sort out which object was which – so it’s no surprise the upper stage itself wound up briefly with a smaller sibling’s ID”

Zond-4 rocket body component

