

Morocco – September 19, 1976

King Hassan of Morocco asks Henry Kissinger to identify glowing cylindrical UFO seen moving northward off the North African coast

Kissinger replies might be a meteor or an undocumented satellite on reentry into atmosphere

Almost forty years later, two amateur satellite trackers use new software and new access to old data bases to validate Kissinger's hunch and tag the object as the motor assembly of a Russian rocket stage (1976-074C / 09051) for the Molniya 1-35 launch.

<http://satobs.org/seesat/Oct-2012/0047.html>

<http://satobs.org/seesat/Oct-2012/0167.html>

<http://satobs.org/seesat/Oct-2012/0173.html>

- FM AMEMBASSY RABAT TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9888
- C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 5209 FOR OES ASST SEC FREDERICK IRVING
- SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR INFO, UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS
- 1. YESTERDAY, THE 23RD OF SEPTEMBER, COL HOUSNI BENSLIMANE, COMMANDER OF THE ROYAL GENDARMERIE, REQUESTED TO SEE ME AT 1000 HOURS THE SAME DAY. WHEN HE ARRIVED, COL BENSLIMANE SAID THAT **THE KING HAD SENT HIM** TO DISUCSS THE SIGHTINGS OF UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS (UFO'S) OVER MOROCCO ON THE NIGHT OF 18-19 SEPTEMBER. ACCORDING TO COL BENSLIMANE, THE GENDARMERIE HAD RECEIVED CALLS FROG AGADIR, THE MARRAKECH AREA, CASABLANCA, RABAT, KENITRA AND OTHER AREAS REPORTING THE SIGHTING OF UFO'S BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 0100 AND 0130, THE NIGHT OF 18-19 SEPTEMBER. REPORTS FROM THESE WIDELY SEPARATE LOCATIONS WERE REMARKABLY SIMILAR, I.E., THAT THE OBJECT WAS ON A GENERALLY SOUTHWEST TO NORTHEAST COURSE, IT WAS A SILVERY LUMINOUS CIRCULAR SHAPE AND GAVE OFF INTERMITTENT TRAILS OF BRIGHT SPARKS AND FRAGMENTS, AND MADE NO NOISE. HE PROMISED TO PROVIDE FURTHER DETAILS TODAY, THE 24TH OF SEPTEMBER AND ASKED THAT WE FURNISH ANY INFORMATION THAT WE MIGHT HAVE ON THESE SIGHTINGS. COL BENSLIMANE SAID THE KING WAS PERSONALLY INTERESTED. I PROMISED THAT WE WOULD DO WHAT WE COULD.
- 2. TODAY, THE 24TH, A MAJOR MOHAMED LISSAOUI OF THE ROYAL GENDARMERIE MET WITH DATT AND GAVE HIM A SUMMARY OF THE SIGHTINGS. LISSAOUI ALSO PERMITTED DATT TO LOOK AT DRAWINGS OF THE UFO PREPARED BY VARIOUS INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING HIMSELF, WHO HAD SIGHTED THE UFO.

3. THE TIMES OF THE SIGHTINGS VARIED FROM 0100 TO 0200 HOURS ON THE MORNING OF 19 SEPTEMBER, WITH THE MAJORITY OF THEM OCCURRING BETWEEN 0100 AND 0130 HOURS. SIGHTINGS WERE REPORTED FROM AGADIR, KALAA-SRAGHNA, ESSAOUIRA, CASABLANCA, RABAT, KENITRA, MEKNES AND THE FEZ REGION. THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT THE UFO WAS PROCEEDING ON AN APPROXIMATELY SOUTH TO NORTH COURSE, GENERALLY PARALLEL TO THE MOROCCAN ATLANTIC COAST, **AT AN ESTIMATED ALTITUDE OF 1,000 METERS**, AND THAT THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO SOUND FROM THE UFO.

4. DESCRIPTIONS OF THE UFO FELL INTO TWO GENERAL CATEGORIES, I.E., A TYPE OF SILVER COLORED LUMINOUS FLATTENED BALL (DISCSHAPED), OR A LARGE LUMINOUS TUBE-SHAPED OBJECT. OBSERVERS REPORTED THAT THE OBJECT INTERMITTENTLY EMITTED BRIGHT SPARKS FROM THE REAR.

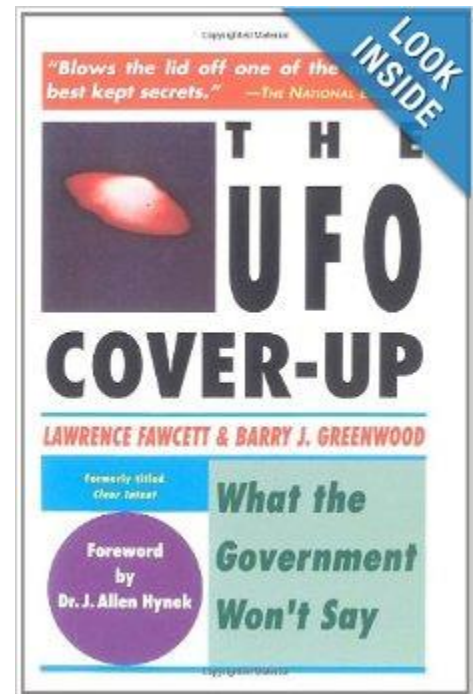
5. MAJOR LISSAOUI SAID HE WAS SENT TO BRIEF DATT ON THE SUBJECT BECAUSE HE HAD HIMSELF SIGHTED THE UFO WHILE RETURNING FROM THE CITY OF KENITRA AT ABOUT 0115 IN THE MORNING. HE DESCRIBED THE UFO AS FLYING PARALLEL TO THE COAST AT A RELATIVELY SLOW SPEED, AS IF IT WERE AN AIRCRAFT PREPARING TO LAND. IT FIRST APPEARED TO HIM AS A DISC-SHAPED OBJECT, BUT AS IT CAME CLOSER HE SAW IT AS A LUMINOUS TUBULAR-SHAPED OBJECT.

6. I FRANKLY DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF THESE SIGHTINGS, ALTHOUGH I FIND INTRIGUING THE SIMILARITY OF DESCRIPTIONS REPORTED FROM WIDELY DISPERSED LOCATIONS. IN ANY EVENT, I WISH TO BE ABLE TO RESPOND PROMPTLY TO KING HASSAN'S REQUEST FOR INFORMATION, AND WOULD APPRECIATE ANYTHING YOU CAN DO TO ASSIST ME IN THIS.

ANDERSON // CONFIDENTIAL

Appearance of object

- Memo content originally described in 1990 book “The UFO Cover-Up: What the Government Won't Say”, by **Lawrence Fawcett and Barry Greenwood**
- See more at:
http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/04/11/wikileaks_the_soviet_space_junk_that_became_a_moroccan_ufo#sthash.JRiWYbZ1.dpuf
- Later included in ‘Wikileaks’ archive
- Flattened ball or tube emitting sparks
- Reference to “drawings” but none seen



State Department Response [October 5, 1976]

- 1. IT IS DIFFICULT TO OFFER ANY DEFINITIVE EXPLANATION AS TO THE CAUSE OR ORIGIN OF THE UFOS SIGHTED IN THE MOROCCAN AREA BETWEEN 0100 AND 0130 LOCAL TIME 19 SEP 1976.
- 2. [generic possible prosaic explanations]
- 3. THE USG IS UNAWARE OF ANY US AIRCRAFT OR SATELLITE ACTIVITY, EITHER MILITARY OR CIVILIAN, IN THE MOROCCAN AREA WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN MISTAKEN FOR SUCH SIGHTINGS ON THE 19 SEPTEMBER 1976. THIS DOES NOT PRECLUDE AIRCRAFT FLIGHTS OR OTHER COUNTRIES OR UNUSUAL ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS OR EVENTS AS A POSSIBLE CAUSE.
- 4. THE WHOLE SUBJECT OF UFOS HAS BEEN ONE OF MUCH CONTROVERSY.[snip]
- 5. ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO MAJOR METEOR SHOWER IN SEPTEMBER, THE SPORADIC METEOR RATE IN THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE IS AT A MAXIMUM IN THE EARLY MORNING AND IN THE AUTUMN MONTHS. BUT, METEORS ARE USUALLY VISIBLE AT AN ALTITUDE AROUND 100 KM, NOT 1 KM. HOWEVER, SUBJECTIVE ESTIMATES OF THE HEIGHT OF SUCH SIGHTINGS ARE USUALLY TOO LOW. THE FLAT TRAJECTORY SW TO NE COULD CONCEIVABLY BE COMPATIBLE WITH A METEOR, OR DECAYING SATELLITE. TANGENTIAL TRAJECTORIES ARE NOT THE MOST LIKELY FOR METEORS, BUT ARE NOT IMPOSSIBLE. IT IS UNLIKELY FROM THE DESCRIPTION THAT THE EVENT COULD HAVE BEEN A REFLECTION FROM A POLAR ORBITING SATELLITE. [snip]
- 8. IN ORDER TO ANALYZE THE MOROCCAN EVENT THOROUGHLY, FURTHER DESCRIPTIONS OR PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE LOCAL AREA WOULD BE NEEDED. IN THE MEANTIME, ONE WOULD TEND TO BELIEVE THAT THE EVENT WAS A METEOR, AND PROBABLY A SPECTACTULAR ONE OR ON ACCOUNT OF THE DESCRIPTION OF SLOW VELOCITY, NO NOISE, AND BURNING FRAGMENTS, A DECAYING SATELLITE PART, OF WHICH THERE IS NO PRECISE RE-ENTRY RECORD.
- KISSINGER

Discussion

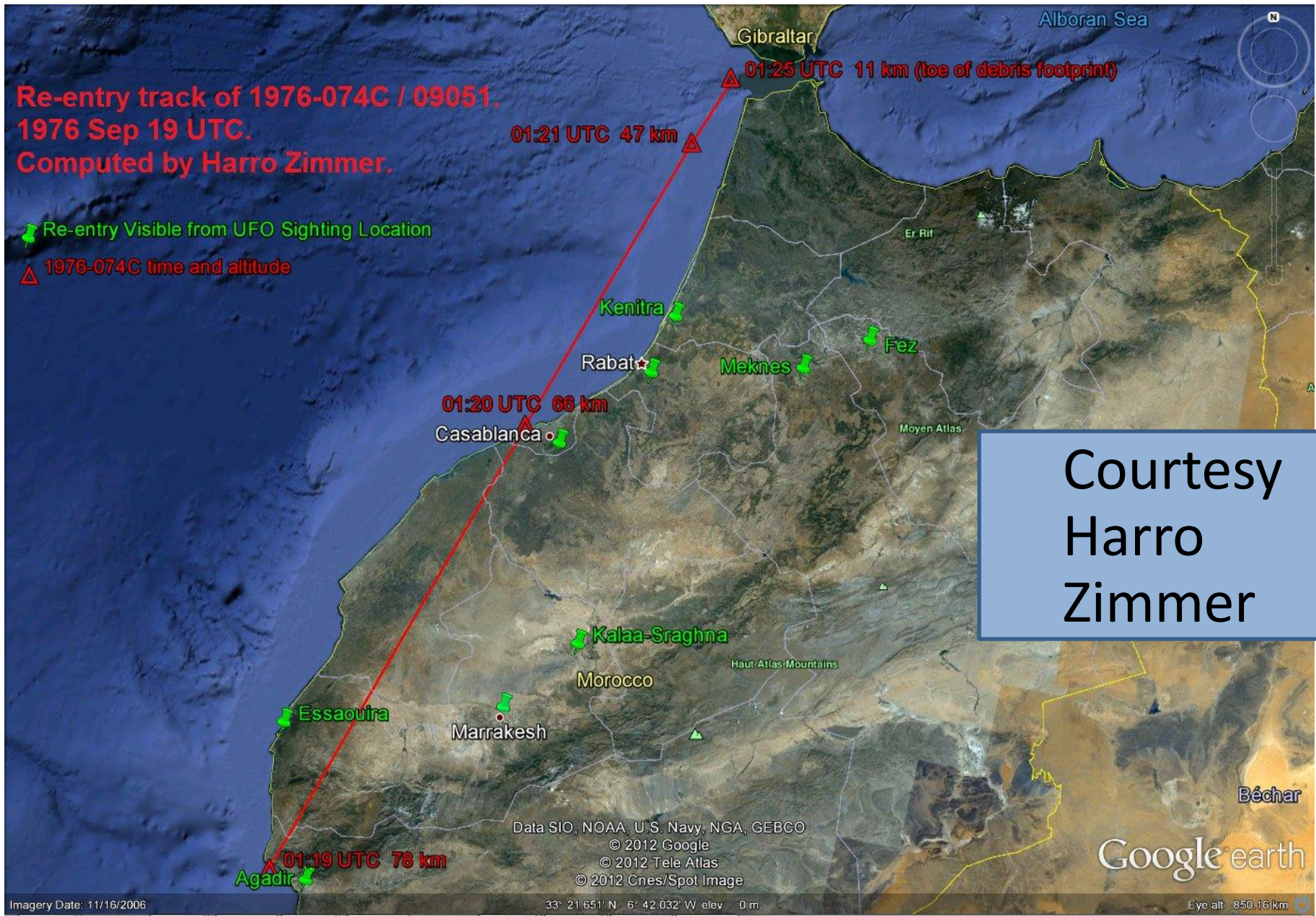
- “UFO” is often erroneously identified as same one that buzzed Iran jets a few hours earlier
- Smaller size of debris apparently precluded many perceptions from bigger reentries
- “Cylinder” shape still reflects classic “cigar”
- Consistent gross underestimation of altitude and speed, and wide clock time scatter, more typical of standard pattern
- Kissinger reply was candid and accurate, with suggestion of a meteor OR reentering satellite

Satellite reentry ground track

Re-entry track of 1976-074C / 09051,
1976 Sep 19 UTC.
Computed by Harro Zimmer.

📍 Re-entry Visible from UFO Sighting Location

📍 1976-074C time and altitude



Courtesy
Harro
Zimmer

Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO
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