

DECLASSIFIED

ALGERIA-2

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RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE AND ALGERIANS WERE ASKING US FIRST BECAUSE SIGHTINGS HAD OCCURRED SO SOON AFTER APPEARANCE AMERICAN JOURNALISTS.

3. HE SAID OBJECT HAD BEEN SEEN FIVE TIMES, USUALLY ABOUT 1900 OR 1930 AND ON ONE OCCASION IT HAD REMAINED VISIBLE FOR OVER TWO HOURS. HAD BEEN SEEN TWICE NEAR ORAN, ONCE IN CENTER OF COUNTRY, ONCE NEAR BECHAR AND, MOST RECENTLY, OFF THE COAST LAST NIGHT (MARCH 6). OBJECT HAS VERY BRIGHT LIGHT (HE KEPT COMPARING IT TO HEADLIGHT OF A CAR) WHICH OBSCURES ITS SHAPE. OBJECT MANEUVERS AND HAS BEEN SEEN TO LAND AND TAKE OFF. SIGHTING LAST NIGHT, AT ABOUT 1930, WAS FIRST BY RADAR AND SECONDLY VISUALLY. OBJECT WAS AT ABOUT 15,000 (SIC) METERS ALTITUDE. ON OTHER OCCASIONS IT HAS BEEN SIGHTED AT ESTIMATED ALTITUDE OF 2,000 METERS. LATRECHE EMPHASIZED THAT IT WAS ALWAYS SEEN BY MORE THAN ONE PERSON AND THAT IT WAS THEREFORE NOT HALLUCINATION. HE DID NOT SEEM PARTICULARLY WORRIED, BUT DID SEEM BE TAKING STORIES SERIOUSLY.

4. I REMARKED THAT ALGERIANS HAD PREVIOUSLY ASKED US ABOUT MYSTERIOUS BALLOON AND OUR QUERIES HAD ELICITED NO INFORMATION. LATRECHE SAID THAT CASE HAD BEEN CLOSED AND THIS WAS ANOTHER. HE SAID ALGERIANS FOLLOWING DEPLOYMENT OF SIXTH FLEET BY RADAR AND AIRCRAFT SURVEILLANCE AND WONDERED WHETHER THESE NEW SIGHTINGS WERE RESULT OF SIXTH FLEET MANEUVERS OF SOME SORT. I SAID IT POSSIBLE THAT SOME PHENOMENON SEEN OFF COAST COULD BE PRODUCED BY FLEET BUT COULD ASSURE HIM CATEGORICALLY THERE WERE NO AIRCRAFT, MACHINES, BALLOONS OR ANYTHING ELSE AMERICAN USING ALGERIAN AIRSPACE WITHOUT EXPLICIT PERMISSION ALGERIAN AUTHORITIES. NEVERTHELESS, I WOULD IMMEDIATELY SEND MESSAGE TO APPROPRIATE CIVILIAN AND MILITARY AUTHORITIES ASKING IF THEY HAD ANY RELEVANT INFORMATION.

5. COMMENT: OUR 2447 REPORTED THAT MYSTERIOUS BALLOON HAD BEEN SIGHTED BY ALGERIANS NEAR ORAN JANUARY 25. THIS EVIDENTLY FIRST SIGHTING OF OBJECT REFERRED TO IN TODAY'S CONVERSATION. WE HAVE NO OTHER DATA ON TIMES

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