

THE EGYPTIAN "AIR RAIDS"

A study in confusion

by Waveney Girvan

IN the March-April World Round-Up feature the FLYING SAUCER REVIEW published the brief accounts of two incidents which occurred over Egypt on the nights of January 27 and 28. Unidentified planes had overflowed Egyptian territory, causing a two-hour blackout on the former occasion: on the latter, ack-ack guns had opened fire. On January 31, the unknowns returned and ack-ack guns opened fire once more. The "raids" were all over the Suez area.

The Press reports were very brief, though the *Daily Express* carried them at the foot of its front page. Most people, therefore, overlooked the item altogether, although the story was sensational enough: if Egypt was being regularly raided then the Middle East must surely be ablaze and the risk of a nuclear war imminent. But nobody seemed to care.

When does an air raid become an "air raid"? I felt that in this question might lie the clue to the mystery. I therefore telephoned the foreign news editor of the *Daily Express*, only to discover that his department was as mystified as I was. They had, I was told on the telephone, been trying to find out more about the news items which they had printed. Apparently, they drew a blank for, as far as I can discover, the *Daily Express* printed nothing more about the matter.

The official view

Before I relate the next step in my inquiry, it should be mentioned that UFOs have not been known to visit Egypt. There is nothing on my files relating to Egypt, but I am open to correction on this point. I do not believe, however, that the Egyptians have heard very much about the flying saucers. One is, therefore, dealing with a virgin public opinion in that country and one is able to study the reaction to UFOs at a primitive stage. Public opinion in Egypt, as far as I can tell, is at the same stage as was the United States prior to 1947. I must also make it clear that I do not know what the objects were that flew over Egyptian territory. I suspect that they were fly-

ing saucers that were caught on radar and so precipitated a reaction on the part of the Egyptian Air Force. It seems, indeed, the likeliest solution to the mystery. What is really important, however, is the reaction of more than one government and it throws a light, I think, on the official point of view—wherever saucers appear.

My first move was to telephone the Egyptian Press Attaché in London. He told me that the objects were unidentified planes. I asked him if they could be Unidentified Flying Objects or UFOs, as they are officially referred to in America. He didn't altogether like the word "objects" and preferred the word "planes." Could they, I asked, have been flying saucers? Emphatically he denied this possibility: the objects, or planes, were solid. He wasn't prepared to admit that saucers could be solid, so for the remainder of our conversation I was obliged to refer to the unknowns as "planes."

The next step

My next question was to ask the Egyptian Press Attaché whose "planes" he thought they were. Without hesitation he blamed the Israeli Government. The only other fact I was able to elicit was that no damage had been caused by any of the "raids" and the unknowns hadn't been hit by the ack-ack guns because they had been flying much too high. Apparently, the Egyptian Government had imposed a censorship.

I then rang the Israeli Press Attaché in London and repeated to him the Egyptian accusation. His reply was to the effect that the Egyptians were in a state of nervousness at the present time and ready to believe anything. I pointed out, however, that they seemed to believe that they had been overflowed by unidentified aircraft. The Israeli official assumed a very knowing tone of voice and after much hesitation told me that the Russians were becoming very interested in Egyptian territory. Israel, he went on, in any case would not be interested in the Suez area for reconnaissance. The part they would be interested

in, if trouble were to arise, would be in the forward air-bases over Sinai. The ball was now in the Russian court, but I felt it a waste of time to ring the Russian Embassy. I could anticipate the reply: the Americans would be the culprits.

By this time I had news of the third "air raid" and I now quote from the London *Sunday Telegraph* for January 29: "The planes said to have violated the Egyptian border in three night 'raids' over the Gaza Strip were French-made Super Mystere jets from the Negev, Israel, according to the Egyptian weekly *Akhbar el Yom*. The paper says that the planes carried French experts in aerial photography for reconnaissance over Egyptian military bases."

A colleague of mine, by the way, had also interviewed the Israeli Embassy and had been told that the craft were "unidentified enemy planes," though the official did not make it clear whether the enemy or the planes had remained unidentified. Now it appeared that the enemy had been identified, but two mysteries still remained. How was the "enemy" identified if the "planes" had not been brought down? And how did French experts in aerial photography indulge their expertise at night?

Although I was by now in danger of running out of embassies, I decided to try the French Air Attaché in London and see what he had to say about the affair. Yes, he had seen the *Sunday Telegraph's* news item and was still laughing about it. Why on earth, he said, should France, at this date, want to take aerial photographs of Egypt? At the time of Suez that might have been likely but not now, he answered. As I happened to know that this official was a friend of General Chassin's, I felt emboldened to put to him the suggestion that the objects which had caused all the mischief might have been flying saucers. He listened attentively.

In conclusion

There are one or two morals to this story. First of all it underlines the warning issued by the FLYING SAUCER REVIEW in its November-December, 1961, number that UFOs might trigger off catastrophe if they were to be taken for an enemy intrusion. The second point is that flying saucers, or some of them at least, seem to be indifferent to, or in ignorance of, our human pre-

occupations. There may be types of saucers that are coming here to hold a helpful and a watching brief over us—this is a point of the fiercest controversy among ufologists—but many others do seem to be here on a mission that can be described only as furtive and to be serving some mysterious purpose of their own at which they resent being discovered. Many of the best authenticated recent sightings have been at night and at times when men are not usually about.

The Egyptian "air raids" serve as an excellent reminder that some governments, at least, are put to cross purposes by our visitors. The representatives of the three governments with whom I spoke had not, apparently, given a thought to the possibility that extra-terrestrial visitors could have caused the comedy of errors related.

If the objects were, in fact, aircraft belonging to one of the powers on earth, then we have an excellent illustration of the newspapers' complete lack of curiosity. No reporter at home or abroad took the trouble to look into the matter. What did the ordinary Egyptian man-in-the-street think about the three "air raids"? We shall never know. The day of the enterprising reporter and the big scoop is over. When I looked to the London evening papers for enlightenment one night, on the front page of both I found the account of a swan having been found dying in a lady's bedroom. This was heady enough, but something even more exciting had occurred. Lord Snowdon had arrived, complete with briefcase, for his first day's work at the *Sunday Times*. Nothing about air-raids. Not even a mention of an "air-raid."

PERSONAL COLUMN

5s. for 3 lines and 5s. for each additional line

SPACE REVIEW presents news about astronomy and space travel, including reliable UFO developments. Six issues yearly for only 6s. 6d. From Miss S. Stebbing, 2 Station Road, Frimley, Surrey.

London Unidentified Flying Object Research Organisation. For Bulletin (1s. 3d., post free), details of membership and activities, please write to the Hon. Sec., 59 Marlborough Road, Bexleyheath, Kent.

THE EAGLE RIVER INCIDENT

A letter from Joe Simonton

IN the July-August, 1961, issue of the *FLYING SAUCER REVIEW* we published a full account of what is known as the Eagle River incident. It concerned an alleged meeting on April 18 between a farmer, Joe Simonton, and three men from a landed saucer four miles from Eagle River, Wisconsin, U.S.A. Mr. Simonton was given some cakes and he claims that he provided water for the visitors in return. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the whole affair was the apparent seriousness devoted to the investigation by a representative of the United States Air Force. This is made all the more surprising in view of the denial of the existence of flying saucers issued by the U.S. Air Force in February, 1962.

As Mr. Simonton was the sole witness his story is, of course, difficult to check, but a series of questions put to him by Dr. Bernard E. Finch has produced a detailed reply. We print his letter below, having anglicised some of the spellings, but otherwise letting Mr. Simonton speak in his own words:

"Dear Sir,

February 22, 1962.

"I have your letter here at hand and I don't quite understand just what you mean when you say in attempting to put it over one needs more evidence. I have the evidence right here in this pancake that I have. I only have one left and I don't let it out of my sight. I got four of these cakes in all and the Air Force got the rest of them for analysis. One they (the Air Force) won't let me use in my story and the other came too late to put in my story. So I am not telling anyone what it is until I get it cleared by the Air Force.

"I hope you understand and I will tell you this—these cakes are not made out of anything we have here on earth would use for pancakes. I hope this drawing will do for what you want it for. Now I sent you one of my stories which tell everything that happened and explained the ship or flying saucer. Now I have three reasons why I think this thing was from another planet. First those men had a complexion much finer than any woman I

ever saw and their eyes just looked right down to the bottom of your shoes. Do you understand? When they looked in your eyes, well you just couldn't stand to look at them for long. They seemed to do something to you. Now I had thousands of people here last summer and I looked them over good but I never saw anyone that had a complexion and eyes like those three men had.

"2. There isn't a country here on earth that don't have rations for their men when they go in the field or on trips. They don't cook their food as they go. Well, these men were cooking their food right on the job. 3. If we or any other country had one of these machines, why would they shoot these million-dollar fire-crackers to get a man into space when they could take one of these flying saucers and put more than one man up in space and back safe all in one day?

"I think I have told you about all I can unless you ask me some questions, then I will answer them. Tell me why do you want all this about my experience? Are you writing it up for some book, paper or story? I wish I could get over to England and tell the people in my own words. But that is out for I'll never make it. I have been giving a few lectures here in the States about my experience. Well, I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,
Joe Simonton."

The analysis of one of the cakes would seem to present a further puzzle, for in our November-December, 1961, issue another of our readers, Mr. W. J. Anstee, of Montreal, Canada, was told in a letter from the U.S. Air Force at Washington that the cake was composed of ordinary terrestrial materials.

Before reaching any conclusions on this matter it is worth recalling that the official investigators, Dr. J. A. Hyneck, Major Robert Friend, representing the Aerospace Technical Intelligence Center, and an officer from the K. I. Sawyer A.F.B., of Gwinn, Michigan, announced that there was "no question that Mr. Simonton felt that his contact had been a real experience."