



‘We’re calling them objects – not balloons – for a reason’: Pentagon refuses to rule out that objects flying over the US are ‘aliens or extraterrestrials’ after third UFO is shot down after flying near sensitive military sites

Description

The Pentagon has refused to rule out the possibility that a slew of unidentified objects shot out of the sky in recent days could be linked to extraterrestrials.

A US fighter jet shot down an ‘unidentified object’ over Lake Huron on Sunday on orders from President Joe Biden. It was the third such downing in three days, and the latest military strike in an extraordinary chain of events over U.S. airspace that Pentagon officials believe has no peacetime precedent.

US Air Force General Glen VanHerck said intelligence services were exploring all avenues – including the notion the three most recent objects could be linked to extraterrestrials.

‘I’ll let the intel community and the counterintelligence community figure that out. I haven’t ruled out anything,’ VanHerck said. ‘At this point we continue to assess every threat or potential threat, unknown, that approaches North America with an attempt to identify it.’

The object detected Sunday was described by defense officials as an unmanned ‘octagonal structure’ with ‘potential surveillance capabilities’ and strings attached to it.

An F-16 fighter jet shot it down from around 20,000ft over the Great Lakes at 2:42pm – after two other crafts were destroyed over Alaska and Canada on Friday and Saturday.

A Chinese balloon was shot down on February 4 over South Carolina, meaning the US air force has now downed four objects in just eight days.



This is the image of the 148th Fighter Wing F-16C that shot down the unidentified object over Lake Heron on Sunday. The missile is circled. The fighter jet is pictured landing back at Madison missing an AIM-9X





VanHerck said that, unlike the [Chinese spy balloon](#), all three UFOs gunned down over the weekend were of a similar size and speed.

Timeline of recent UFO sightings over US airspace

Wednesday, February 1: Chinese balloon is spotted above Montana (this is not being referred to as a UFO as it was identified as a balloon)

Saturday, February 4: Chinese balloon is shot down off the coast of South Carolina after having drifted across the country

Thursday, February 9: First UFO is detected off coast of northern Alaska

Friday, February 10: UFO is shot down over Deadhorse, Alaska

Saturday, February 11: Second UFO is shot down over Mayo, Yukon, Canada.

FAA shuts down airspace over Montana citing another possible UFO, but NORAD claims it was a

‘radar anomaly’

Sunday, February 12: Third UFO is detected over the Great Lakes and shot down

He added that since the Chinese balloon was found in late January, the US adjusted its radar so it could track slower objects. He explained that this radar adjustment, plus the heightened state of alert following the Chinese balloon, explains the frequency of UFO sightings.

‘With some adjustments, we’ve been able to get a better categorization of radar tracks now,’ he said, ‘and that’s why I think you’re seeing these, plus there’s a heightened alert to look for this information.’

But this gave way to concerns the US air force may have missed untold numbers of UFOs in the past.

US Senator Marco Rubio tweeted: ‘The last 72 hours revealed to the public what was happening for years, unidentified aircraft routinely operating over restricted US airspace.’

‘This is why I pushed to take this seriously and created a permanent UAP task force two years ago.’

Christopher Mellon, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Intelligence in the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations, said: ‘The USAF *really* has some explaining to do when it comes to UAP. People who are surprised at the presence of these objects haven’t been paying attention.’

‘One of the reasons why I’ve been calling for changes to our sensor and reporting procedures for years.’

VanMerck said the air force is still unsure how the three objects were staying aloft, as they currently have unknown propulsion systems. He added: ‘We’re calling them objects, not balloons, for a reason.’

He added: ‘I believe this is the first time within United States or American airspace that NORAD or United States Northern Command has taken kinetic action against an airborne object.’

As the Pentagon more closely scrutinizes US airspace, authorities are not ruling out that there may be more sightings and shoot-downs in the coming days.

Speaking about the most recent object shot down on Sunday, a Department of Defense spokesperson said: ‘Based on its flight path and data we can reasonably connect this object to the radar signal picked up over Montana, which flew in proximity to sensitive DOD sites.’

‘We did not assess it to be a kinetic military threat to anything on the ground, but assess it was a safety flight hazard and a threat due to its potential surveillance capabilities. Our team will now work to recover the object in an effort to learn more.’



Marco Rubio  @marcorubio · 9h

The last 72 hours revealed to the public what has happening for years, unidentified aircraft routinely operating over restricted U.S. airspace

This is why I pushed to take this seriously & created a permanent UAP task force two years ago



Christopher K. Mellon  @ChrisKMellon

The USAF *really* has some explaining to do when it comes to UAP. People who are surprised at the presence of these objects haven't been paying attention-- One of the reasons why I've been calling for changes to our sensor and reporting procedures for years.

US Senator Marco Rubio and former defense and intelligence official Christopher Mellon criticized the US air force and radar procedures, claiming untold numbers of UFOs may have been operating in US airspace unbeknownst to authorities



US Air Force General Glen VanHerck said they are still unsure how the three objects were staying aloft, as they currently have unknown propulsion systems

The object on Sunday was shot down because of the increased 'abundance of caution.' It has not yet been identified.

A spokesperson said on Sunday night: 'We will remain vigilant. The operations in the last week have been successful in taking down the potential threats.'

The Pentagon added: 'Its path and altitude raised concerns, including that it could be a hazard to civil aviation. The location chosen for this shoot down afforded us the opportunity to avoid impact to people on the ground while improving chances for debris recovery.'

'There are no indications of any civilians hurt or otherwise affected.'

The revelation that the air force is not ruling out that this could be extraterrestrial comes after a report in December revealed The Department of Defense has analyzed 'hundreds' of UFO sightings from its service members since last year.

Some of objects flying in ways they don't yet understand, and some in space and underwater, officials revealed.

The head of the government's UFO office Dr. Sean Kirkpatrick revealed that they had received reports from intelligence and military officers and other agencies of unidentified objects not only in the air, but also underwater and even in space – and emphasized the DoD's cooperation with NASA in trying to identify UFOs.

Rep. Jack Bergman, of Michigan, tweeted Sunday afternoon that he had been in contact with his colleagues at the Department of Defense following reports of an unidentified aircraft making its way across the Great Lakes.

Around 3.30pm, he revealed: 'The US military has decommissioned another 'object' over Lake Huron.'

The announcement marks the object shot down by the American military over the weekend, after one was shot down over Alaska on Friday and another was shot down in Canada on Saturday.

Democrat Debbie Dingell – from Michigan where Sunday's UFO was downed – said: 'We need the facts about where they are originating from, what their purpose is, and why their frequency is increasing.'

Meanwhile, [GOP](#) Rep. Matt Rosendale has insisted that there is another mysterious flying object in the skies above Montana, where air space was closed Sunday afternoon.



HOW WERE RADAR SYSTEMS USED TO SPOT THE UFO?

The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) has spotted a Chinese balloon and three UFOs in the last month using its radar systems.

Officials said that the increased number of hits could be the result of recent changes made to the way analysts are interpreting radar information.

Certain filters have been removed which would normally limit the amount of raw data collected, and simplify the process.

This is making the radar systems more sensitive so they can pick up harder-to-detect objects.

But it also makes it harder to distinguish between actual UFOs and background noise.

However, this does not mean that NORAD has ruled out deliberate action from an adversary.



Radar is an acronym for 'RAdio Detection And Ranging', and was first developed in World War Two to aid fighter pilots

Radar is an acronym for 'RAdio Detection And Ranging', and was first developed in World War Two to aid fighter pilots.

It works by a machine sending out a high-frequency radio wave and then a separate sensor detecting it when it bounces back.

This is much the same way that sight works; light is bounced off an object and into the eye, where it is detected and processed.

Instead of using visible light, which has a small wavelength, radar uses radio waves which have a far

larger wavelength.

By detecting the range of waves that have bounced back, a computer can create an image of what is ahead that is invisible to the human eye.

This can be used to see through different materials, in darkness, fog and a variety of different weather conditions.

Scientists often use this method to detect terrain and also see to study archaeological and valuable finds.

US Northern Command Commander General Glen VanHerck said that the recent UFOs objects produce a 'very, very low radar cross-section'.

A radar cross-section is a measure of how much radar energy an object reflects back to the sensors, and therefore how detectable it is.

It is dependent on the object's size, shape, material and orientation.

A low radar cross-section could be produced by a small, smooth object with lots of curves that is positioned edge-on towards the emitted signal.

It remains unknown whether these flying objects are more Chinese spy balloons, as the White House refuses to characterize them until the debris is collected.

United States Rep. Elise Slotkin also confirmed that the Unidentified Aerial Phenomena was struck down over Lake Huron.

'The object has been downed by pilots from the US [Air Force] and National Guard,' she tweeted. 'Great work by all who carried out this mission both in the air and back at headquarters.'

'We're all interested in exactly what this object was and its purpose,' she continued. 'As long as these things keep traversing the US and Canada, I'll continue to ask for Congress to get a full briefing based on our exploration from the wreckage.'

The Democrat had earlier tweeted that 'our military has an extremely close eye on the object above Lake Huron.'

'We'll know more about what this was in the coming days, but for now, be assured that all parties have been laser-focused on it from the moment it traversed our waters.'

Only a few hours earlier, the Federal Aviation Administration abruptly closed 'national defense airspace' over part of Lake Michigan.

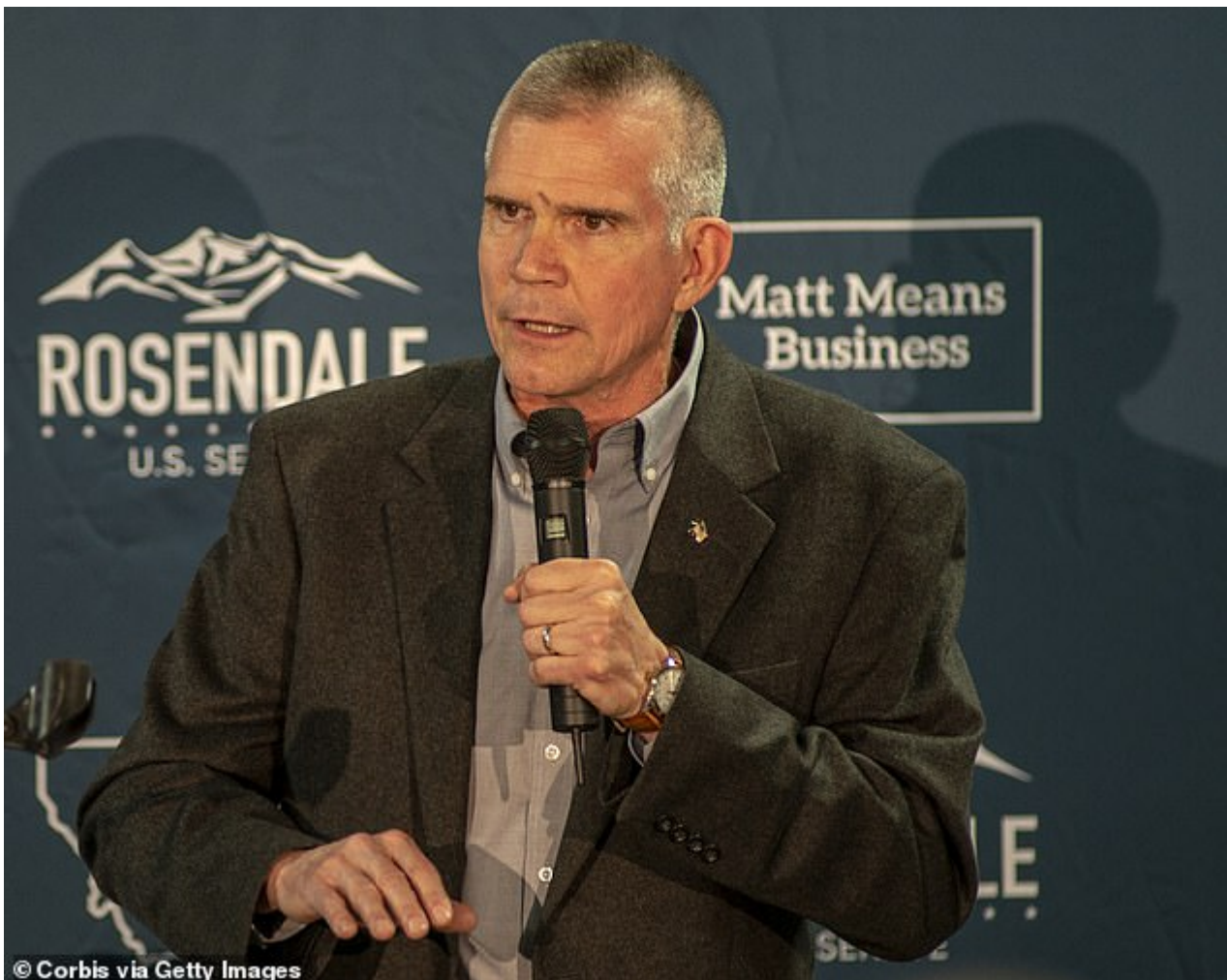
The agency announced that it closed down the area to examine a 'potential contact'. It was lifted less than an hour later.

[GOP](#) Rep. Matt Rosendale revealed on Saturday that he was informed of such a developing incident, though officials at the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) later indicated that was a false alarm.

But according to the Montana conservative's latest update – the situation may have been more serious than it seemed.

'I am in constant communication with NORCOM and they have just advised me that they have confidence there IS an object and it WAS NOT an anomaly,' Rosendale wrote on [Twitter](#).

'I am waiting now to receive visual confirmation. Our nation's security is my priority.'



Montana Rep. Matt Rosendale said he was in communication with officials on Sunday about an unidentified object in his state's airspace



Matt Rosendale ✓
@RepRosendale

...

I am in constant communication with NORCOM and they have just advised me that they have confidence there IS an object and it WAS NOT an anomaly. I am waiting now to receive visual confirmation. Our nation's security is my priority.

12:35 PM · Feb 12, 2023 · **43K** Views

It comes after earlier updates he posted about a sighting of an unknown object on Saturday night. DailyMail.com reached out to NORAD for comment but was directed to the agency's previous public statements. A subsequent inquiry sent on Rosendale's latest post was not immediately returned.

The Pentagon said it had nothing further to add other than NORAD's Saturday night statement.

Montana's Democratic Sen. Jon Tester said on Sunday that he was in touch with Defense officials regarding the developments from Saturday night, but offered no new updates himself.

'I'm continuing to receive regular updates from the Pentagon and our intelligence community as we closely monitor American airspace in light of last night's development. I will keep holding them accountable so the public gets the answers they deserve,' Tester said.

The moderate senator indicated earlier on CBS News' Face The Nation that he was still aware of something developing in Montana's airspace.

'I think the investigation is still going on as we speak,' Tester said.

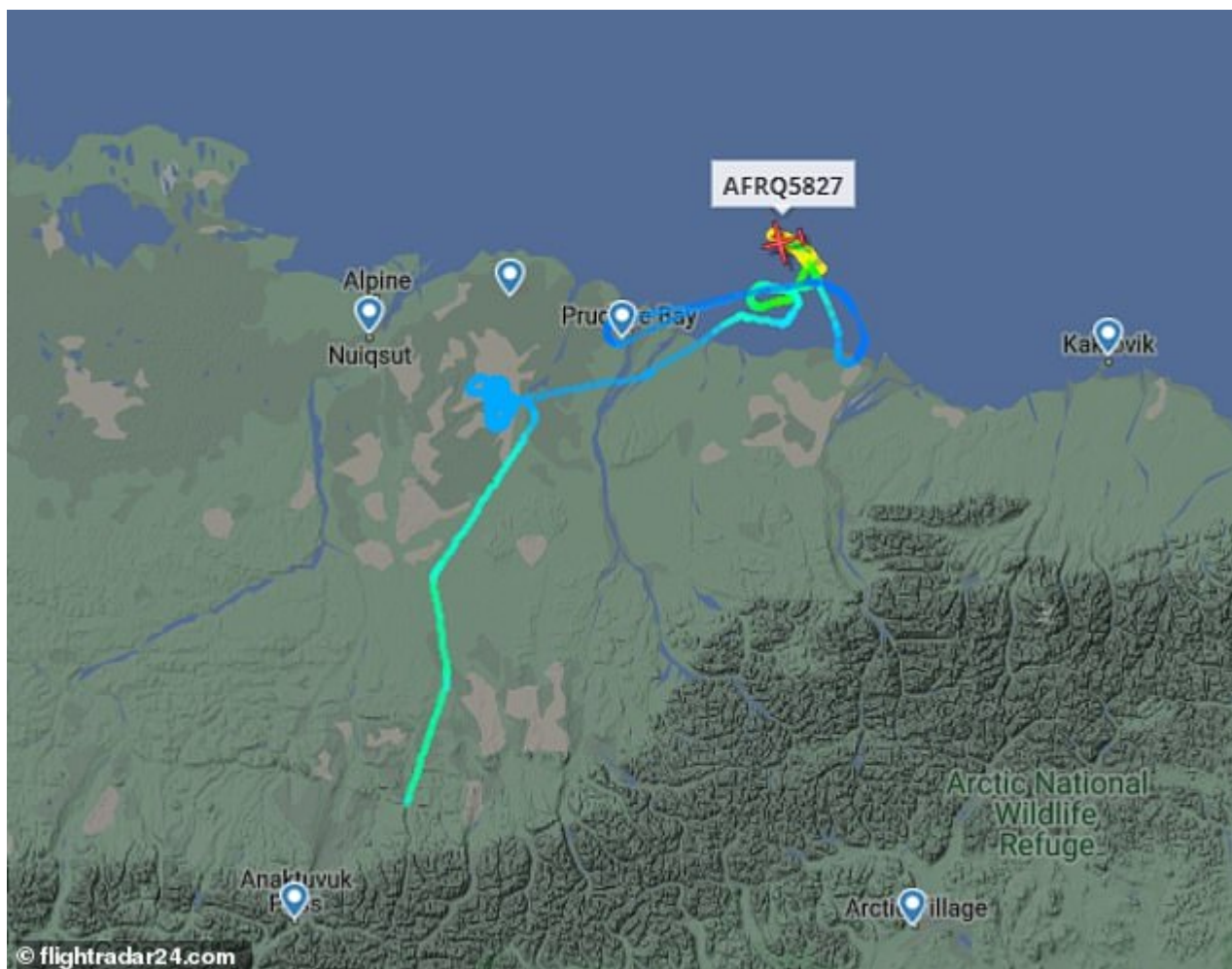
'The truth is, is that there was an anomaly, and they've investigated. I think it got dark last night, so they couldn't fully check it out. I'm sure, as we speak, it's being checked out right now.'

He summarized the uncertainty, 'There may still be something out there. It may be a false alarm.'

If there is indeed an unknown or malign object in Montana's airspace, Tester guessed 'it'll get shot down' by the military.

It's not immediately clear what the object is, or where it's from, but Americans have been on high alert ever since the Chinese spy balloon shot down last weekend led to a host of revelations about Beijing's vast global surveillance program.

Defense officials said they were able to gain valuable insight into China's spy balloon program by studying the device as it drifted across the country, while avoiding shooting it down over the continental US and risking injuries for Americans on the ground.



A flight radar shows military aircraft scrambled off the northeast coast of Alaska to search for the debris from the unidentified object. This comes after the US reportedly developed a system in 2022 to detect spy balloons on a radar



The fighter jets were scrambled from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson near Anchorage on Friday morning to intercept the object near Deadhorse Bay (above) on the northeast coast

The sighting on Sunday marks the third unidentified aerial object found flying over American soil in just one weekend.

On Thursday, officials said, a UAP — or unidentified aerial phenomena — was picked up on United States radar when it was crossing over Alaska.

Crews then conducted a fly-by that night, with a second on Friday morning.

National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby revealed on Friday it had been shot down within an hour of an order issued by President Joe Biden.

The object was taken down by an F-22 using an A9X missile out of Joint Base Elmendorf–Richardson in Anchorage.

Several officials also said the object shattered into pieces after being struck by the missile, adding to the mystery of what the object truly is.

A US official revealed the pilots who intercepted the object said it had a cylindrical shape and no observable surveillance equipment attached.

Authorities have only said it was traveling at an altitude that was potentially harmful for civilian aircrafts, The New York Times reported.

The Pentagon has now launched a recovery operation to collect the debris from the surface of the frozen waters off Alaska.



Justin Trudeau, Canada's prime minister, is seen on Tuesday. On Saturday he announced an 'unidentified object' had been shot down over the Yukon



Justin Trudeau  @JustinTrudeau · 31m

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🇨🇦 Officiel du gouvernement - Canada

Replying to [@JustinTrudeau](#)

I spoke with President Biden this afternoon. Canadian Forces will now recover and analyze the wreckage of the object. Thank you to NORAD for keeping the watch over North America.

 162

 854

 4,641

 228.6K



© Twitter / @JustinTrudeau



Justin Trudeau

@JustinTrudeau

Officiel du gouvernement - Canada

I ordered the take down of an unidentified object that violated Canadian airspace. @NORADCommand shot down the object over the Yukon. Canadian and U.S. aircraft were scrambled, and a U.S. F-22 successfully fired at the object.

© Twitter / @JustinTrudeau

The next day, another UAP was spotted flying over Canada.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced on Saturday that he had requested US and Canadian forces scramble to intercept 'an unidentified object that violated Canadian airspace', and a U.S. F-22 shot it down at 3:41pm Eastern Standard Time.

A senior government source explained to [CBC News](#) that the object crossed into Canadian territory on Saturday morning. It was described as being smaller than the Chinese spy balloon that made its way across the US earlier this month.

Two F-22s were dispatched from the U.S. from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Alaska; and two F-18s from Cold Lake Air Base in Alberta, Canada to shoot down the object over Canada.

It was shot down with an AIM-9X missile at 3:41pm Eastern Standard Time, and was flying at about 40,000 feet. The missile is described by the manufacturer as 'the most advanced infrared-tracking, short-range, air-to-air and surface-to-air missile in the world.'

In the aftermath, Trudeau said Canadian teams were now working to recover the debris.

'I ordered the take down of an unidentified object that violated Canadian airspace,' he tweeted on Saturday.

'@NORADCommand shot down the object over the Yukon. Canadian and U.S. aircraft were scrambled, and a U.S. F-22 successfully fired at the object.'

Trudeau said that he had been in contact with Biden about the intrusion.

He thanked NORAD – the North American Aerospace Defense Command, based in Colorado Springs, Colorado – for their work with his forces.

'I spoke with President Biden this afternoon. Canadian Forces will now recover and analyze the wreckage of the object,' Trudeau said.

'Thank you to NORAD for keeping the watch over North America.'

Canada's defense minister, Anita Anand, also praised the joint operation.

She said that she had discussed the incident with US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin ‘and reaffirmed that we’ll always defend our sovereignty together.’

The origins of these aircraft remain unclear, with the Biden administration contradicting Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer’s assertion that they balloons.

Officials have said they would not definitively characterize these aircrafts as ‘balloons’ until the debris is recovered.

A spokesperson for the National Security Council has also said that the latest objects did not closely resemble a Chinese spy balloon that was shot down off the coast of South Carolina last weekend.



Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer received a briefing on the two recently downed objects on Saturday night

Schumer said the objects were ‘much smaller’ than the balloon downed earlier this month, which was confirmed by US Defense officials to be a spying device from Beijing.

He did not say where those objects originated or whether he learned of their purpose, nor did he give any indication they were related to China’s surveillance program.

Republicans had heaped criticism on the Biden administration for only shooting it down after it traversed several US states at a low enough altitude to be seen by the naked eye – unnerving millions of Americans. .

By contrast, the objects shot down over Alaska on Friday and Canada on Saturday were taken down in remote wilderness shortly after detection.

But on Sunday, Schumer defended the Pentagon's response to the initial balloon and praised how the latest two incidents were handled.

'Both of those, one over Canada, one over Alaska were at 40,000 feet. Immediately it was determined that that's a danger to commercial aircraft which also fly at 40,000 feet,' Schumer said.

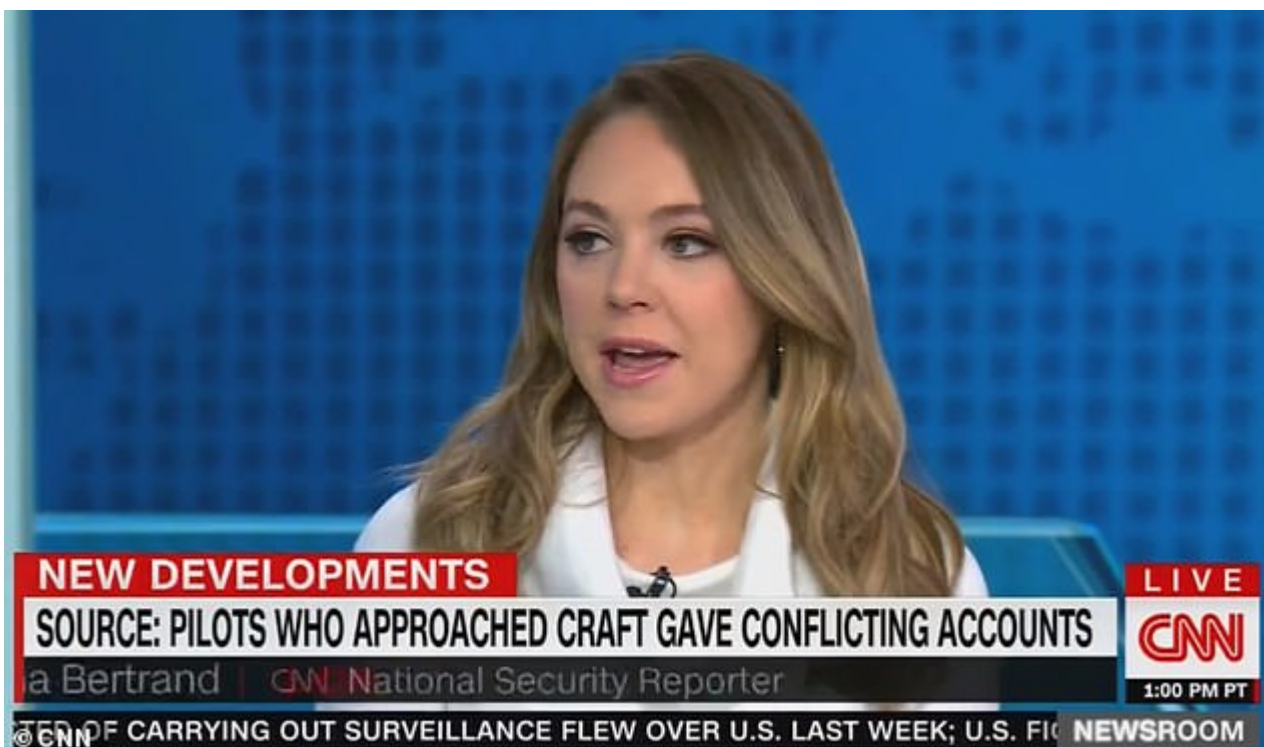
'The first balloon, there was a much different rationale which I think was the appropriate rationale. We got enormous intelligence information from surveilling the balloon as it went over the United States.'

The New York Democrat did not say whether the latter two also came from China or if they were used for surveillance.

Since then the Pentagon has revealed it detected one other balloon in US airspace under the Biden administration, as well as three across Donald Trump's White House term – something the Republican administration's officials have denied.

Defense officials believe they are part of a massive surveillance effort spanning 40 different countries – but one that the US did not detect until President Biden took office.

'It is wild that we didn't know,' Schumer conceded during his television interview.



CNN's Natasha Bertrand revealed over the weekend that F-35 pilots charged with taking down an unidentified flying object over Alaska did not know what it was

Fighter pilots who shot down the object over Alaska have revealed that it 'interfered with their sensors' and had 'no identifiable propulsion system.'

In an interview with host Jim Acosta on Saturday, [CNN](#)'s Natasha Bertrand reported on the findings of the F-35 pilots called in to take down an unidentified flying object over Alaska on Friday.

She brought up the fact that another unidentified flying object was shot down over Alaska on Friday by Air Force pilots who 'were not able to identify what they saw.'

'So when the US first detected this object over Alaska on Thursday, they sent up F-35 jets to kind of look at it and see what was going on. And these pilots reported back very conflicting accounts,' she revealed.

'Some of them said that this object was actually interfering with the sensors of their aircraft and they couldn't figure out why, because there was no identifiable kind of surveillance equipment on the object.'

'There was nothing that appeared readily able to interfere with that communication system,' Bertrand said.

'And then other pilots were saying that they did not see anything on the object that appeared able to propel it, that it seemed like there was no way that this was actually able to stay in the air.'

She pointed out that the pilots were flying really fast so it is 'possible that these pilots just didn't get a good look at it.'

'But that is part of why the Pentagon has been so reluctant to come out and say more about what this object actually is.'

By CLAUDIA AORAHA

Category

1. Army-Wars-Conflict Zones-Military Tech.
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