

Top US general not ruling out aliens after military shoots down 3 UFOs

By Snejana Farberov

February 13, 2023 8:26am Updated



General Glen VanHerck says he not ruling out aliens after military shoots down 3 UFOs during press Pentagon briefing

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'No indication of aliens' in spate of shoot-downs, White House claims

The US Air Force general overseeing North American airspace said Sunday he was not ruling out aliens after a string of shoot-downs of unidentified objects.

Asked whether he had ruled out an extraterrestrial origin for three floating objects shot down by warplanes in as many days, Gen. Glen VanHerck said: "I'll let the intel community and the counterintelligence community figure that out."

"I haven't ruled out anything," added VanHerck, head of US North American Aerospace Defense Command and Northern Command.

"At this point we continue to assess every threat or potential threat, unknown, that approaches North America with an attempt to identify it."

VanHerck's comments came during a Pentagon briefing after an F-16 fighter jet shot down an octagonal-shaped object over Lake Huron on the US-Canada border.



Gen. Glen VanHerck, head of US North American Aerospace Defense Command and Northern Command, said he was not ruling out aliens after several mystery objects were found floating over the US and Canada.

Getty Images

The mystery object had strings hanging off it but carried no perceptible payload. It was shot out of the sky with an AIM9x missile about 20,000 feet over Lake Huron. The military was planning to retrieve it from the water to learn about its origin.

The incidents over the past three days involving airborne objects of unknown origin follow the Feb. 4 downing of a Chinese spy balloon that put North American air defenses on high alert. US officials said the balloon was being used for surveillance.

Another US defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the military had seen no evidence suggesting any of the objects in question were of extraterrestrial origin.

VanHerck said the military was unable to immediately determine the means by which any of the three latest objects were kept aloft or where they were coming from.

2/14/2023

Top general not ruling out aliens after 3 UFOs shot down

VanHerck's comments came after a Chinese spy balloon was spotted floating over the US a week ago.

Tyler Schlitt Photography

On Feb. 4, a fighter jet shot down the Chinese spy balloon off South Carolina.

AP

"We're calling them objects, not balloons, for a reason," said VanHerck.

The shoot-down over Lake Huron followed the US takedowns of two other unidentified objects over Alaska and Canada on Friday and Saturday, respectively.

VanHerck said the three most recent objects were “very, very small” and moved at slow speeds.

The incidents come as the Pentagon has undertaken a new push in recent years to investigate military sightings of UFOs — rebranded in official government parlance as “unidentified aerial phenomena” or UAPs.

The government’s effort to investigate anomalous, unidentified objects — whether they are in space, the skies or even underwater — has led to hundreds of documented reports that are being investigated, senior military leaders have said.

The downed spy balloon was retrieved by the military on Feb. 5.

AP

But the Pentagon says it has not found evidence to indicate Earthly visits from intelligent alien life.

Analysis of military sightings are conducted by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence in conjunction with a newly created Pentagon bureau known as AARO, short for the cryptically named All Domain Anomaly Resolution Office.

Its first report to Congress in June 2021 examined 144 sightings by US military aviators dating to 2004.

That study attributed one incident to a large, deflating balloon but found the rest were beyond the government's ability to explain without further analysis.

The government's effort to investigate unidentified objects has led to hundreds of documented reports that are being investigated.

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Ruling out aliens? Senior U.S. general says not ruling out anything yet

By Phil Stewart and Idrees Ali




WASHINGTON, Feb 12 (Reuters) - The U.S. Air Force general overseeing North American airspace said on Sunday after a series of shoot-downs of unidentified objects that he would not rule out aliens or any other explanation yet, deferring to U.S. intelligence experts.

Asked whether he had ruled out an extraterrestrial origin for three airborne objects shot down by U.S. warplanes in as many days, General Glen VanHerck

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"At this point we continue to assess every threat or potential threat, unknown, that approaches North America with an attempt to identify it," said VanHerck, head of U.S. North American Aerospace Defense Command and Northern Command.



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VanHerck's comments came during a Pentagon briefing on Sunday after a U.S. F-16 fighter jet shot down an octagonal-shaped object over Lake Huron on the U.S.-Canada border.

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The incidents over the past three days follow the Feb. 4 downing of a Chinese balloon that put North American air defenses on high alert. U.S. officials said that balloon was being used for surveillance. Another U.S. defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the military had seen no evidence suggesting any of the objects in question were of extraterrestrial origin.

VanHerck said the military was unable to immediately determine the means by which any of the three latest objects were kept aloft or where they were coming from.

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parlance as "unidentified aerial phenomena," or UAPs.



A cluster of young stars resembles an aerial burst, surrounded by clouds of interstellar gas and dust, in a nebula NGC 3603 located in the constellation Carina, in this image captured in August 2009 and December 2009. NASA/ESA/R. O'Connell/F. Paresce/E. Young/Ames Research Center/WFC3 Science Oversight Committee/Hubble Heritage Team/STScI/AURA/Handout via REUTERS

The government's effort to investigate anomalous, unidentified objects - whether they are in space, the skies or even underwater - has led to hundreds of documented reports that are being investigated, senior military leaders have said.

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That study attributed one incident to a large, deflating balloon but found the rest were beyond the government's ability to explain without further analysis.

A report from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence issued last month cited 366 additional sightings, mostly things like balloons, drones, birds or airborne clutter. But 171 remained officially unexplained.

"Some of these uncharacterized UAP appear to have demonstrated unusual flight characteristics or performance capabilities, and require further analysis," the office said in the report.

Sill, Ronald Moultrie, under secretary of defense for intelligence and security, told reporters in December that he had not seen anything in the files to indicate intelligent alien life.

"I have not seen anything in those holdings to date that would suggest that there has been an alien visitation, an alien crash or anything like that," Moultrie said.

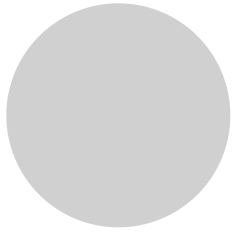


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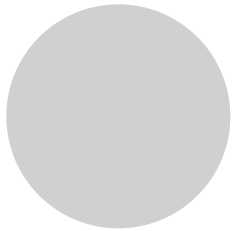
Reporting by Phil Stewart and Idrees Ali in Washington; Additional reporting by Joey Roulette in Washington and Steve Gorman in Los Angeles; Editing by Lisa Shumaker and Tim Ahmann



**Phil Stewart**

Thomson Reuters

Phil Stewart has reported from more than 60 countries, including Afghanistan, Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, China and South Sudan. An award-winning Washington-based national security reporter, Phil has appeared on NPR, PBS NewsHour, Fox News and other programs and moderated national security events, including at the Reagan National Defense Forum and the German Marshall Fund. He is a recipient of the Edwin M. Hood Award for Diplomatic Correspondence and the Joe Galloway Award.

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Thomson Reuters

National security correspondent focusing on the Pentagon in Washington D.C. Reports on U.S. military activity and operations throughout the world and the impact that they have. Has reported from over two dozen countries to include Iraq, Afghanistan, and much of the Middle East, Asia and Europe. From Karachi, Pakistan.

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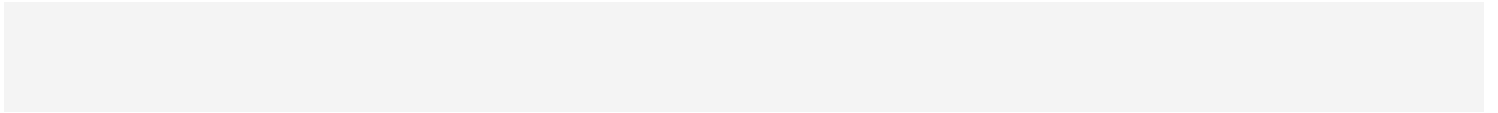
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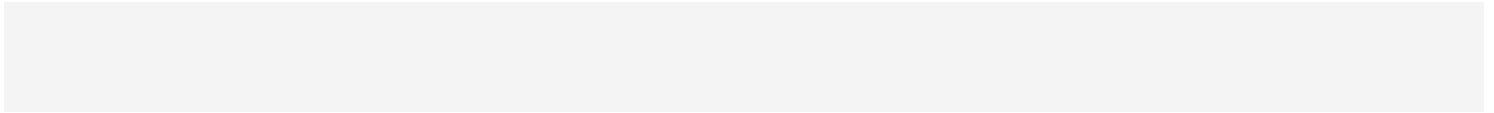
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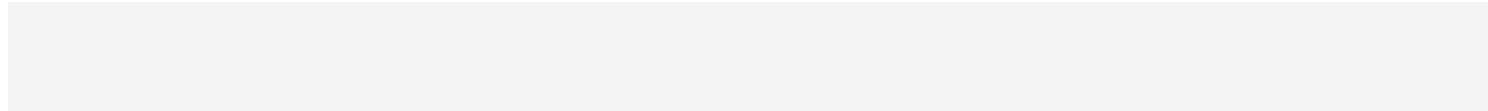
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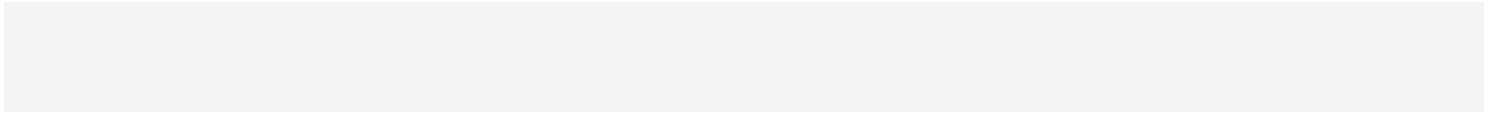
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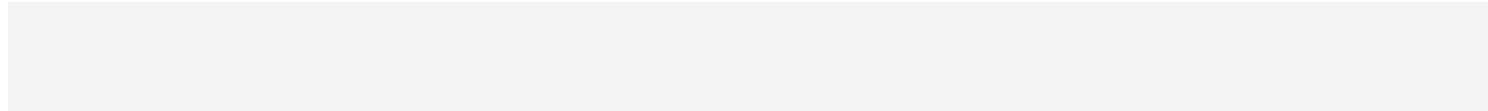
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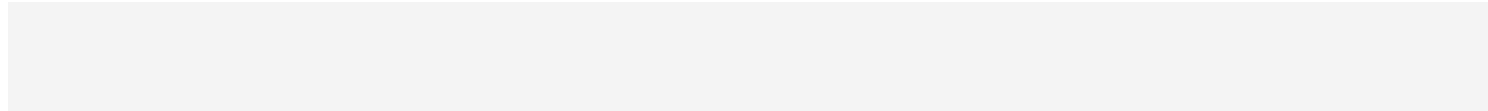












'I Haven't Ruled Out Anything.' U.S. General Doesn't Eliminate Aliens As UFOs Mount

BY **W.J. HENNIGAN**

FEBRUARY 12, 2023 9:58 PM EST

A U.S. fighter jet shot down a high-flying object above Lake Huron Sunday after it flew near a sensitive military site, the Pentagon said.

The shoot-down, which came on President Joe Biden's order, is the latest in an unusual series of aerial incidents that began last week when a **suspected Chinese spy balloon** traversed the continental United States.

At 2:42 p.m. Eastern time, an F-16 launched a heat-seeking AIM-9X missile at an unidentified "object" flying at around 20,000 ft. above the Great Lake. It was the fourth time in eight days that the American military has been called upon to destroy a mysterious craft in midair, including three in the last three days.

Other than the first balloon, which China has acknowledged was theirs, the Pentagon doesn't yet know what the objects are or where they came from. Asked directly, a senior military official did not rule out the possibility that their provenance could be extraterrestrial.

"I'll let the intel community and the counterintelligence community figure that out," General Glen VanHerck, commander of U.S. Northern Command and the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) told reporters late Sunday.

"I haven't ruled out anything," VanHerck said when asked if aliens could be involved. "At this point, we continue to assess every threat or potential threat unknown that approaches North America with an attempt to identify it."

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The Pentagon is now trying to obtain debris from each of the four shoot-downs in an effort to learn more about the crafts penetrating North American airspace. VanHerck acknowledged the military is perplexed.

“I’m not going to categorize them as balloons,” VanHerck said. “We’re calling them objects for a reason. I’m not able to categorize how they stay aloft.” None of the flying objects have posed a threat to anything on the ground, VanHerck said, but they have been assessed to be safety hazards to civilian air traffic and potential surveillance threats.

The flurry of incidents is due at least in part to an increase in military vigilance in the wake of the Chinese balloon. NORAD has tweaked its radar “gates” to account for lower speeds and sizes to spot more flying objects. “We have adjusted some of those gates to give us better fidelity on seeing smaller objects,” VanHerck said. “You can also filter out by altitude. And so, with some adjustments, we’ve been able to get a better categorization of radar-tracks now.”

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Every day, NORAD monitors airspace across North America. On Saturday at about 4:45 p.m. Eastern Time, the military command registered a radar contact in Canadian airspace, about 70 miles north of the U.S. border. The craft was not in communication with the Federal Aviation Administration, so VanHerck sent F-15 fighters from Portland, Oregon, to investigate over Montana. The F-15s arrived at 7:04, and within 45 minutes it became dark. The aviators ultimately couldn’t identify and locate the object in the dark. VanHerck didn’t identify the “sensitive” military site that the object flew over, but Montana is home to a sprawling field where nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missiles sit ready-for-launch in underground silos. The Chinese balloon lingered over that site, according to U.S. officials.

On Sunday morning, NORAD made another radar contact near Wisconsin. “It’s likely, but we have not confirmed that the track that we saw in Wisconsin was likely the same track in Montana,” VanHerck said. NORAD tracked the object over Lake Michigan, he said, and as it passed over the state’s upper peninsula, the military engaged it.

Up until a week ago, the U.S. had never shot down an airborne object in North American airspace that was deemed to be a threat. Now the extraordinary has come to seem commonplace. On Feb. 4, the U.S. blasted apart the **mammoth Chinese balloon** over the Atlantic Ocean. On Feb. 10, on Friday, an American fighter jet **shot down a small car-sized** “object” off the Alaskan coast. The next day a fighter brought down another “object” over northern Canada.

The Pentagon and the Director of National Intelligence has an **ongoing review of hundreds** of UFO incidents documented in recent years without explanation. Melissa Dalton, assistant secretary of defense for homeland defense and hemispheric affairs, said the Biden Administration hasn’t made a policy change in how it treats unidentified flying objects in U.S. airspace.

“We are taking this pretty much on a case-by-case basis,” she told reporters during the briefing on Sunday. “Each operation has been different. And we will certainly keep you updated as we continue to learn more about these objects and the (People’s Republic of China’s) balloon and what that means for us going forward.”

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