

# Commentary

## Whose Objects Are These?

Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

Yesterday I noticed a couple of balloons floating over my house. My first instinct was to call the FBI, but I resisted lest they'd send another F22 buzzing over my head and would shoot down the balloons with a \$400,000 AIM-9X Sidewinder missile razing and burning my modest dwelling and costing an arm and a leg to the citizens of the United States.

It all began with the Chinese spy balloon. After allowing it to fly for several days over US territory, the American military finally shot down over the country's territorial waters what it said was a surveillance device. After the Chinese balloon completed its surveil of the key nuclear sites of the United States, the White House decided to take a hard line. For its part, Beijing maintains that the object was a weather balloon and that US balloons entered Chinese airspace 10 times last year, which the US denies.

Since that incident, at least three more unidentified flying objects have been detected over North American airspace. The

first was initially seen flying along the coast of Alaska. US F-22 fighter aircraft were scrambled to pursue it and shoot it down



near the Arctic. This object was said to be about the size of a small car.

A few days later, another object, smaller than but similar in shape to the Chinese

spy balloon, was shot down over Canada's Yukon territory by US fighter aircraft after the approval of the Canadian prime minister. On Sunday, another object was shot down over Lake Huron in Michigan. This object was reportedly hexagonal in shape.

It is estimated that they were experimental balloons that originated from some private lab valued at \$12 U.S. apiece. The United States spent \$400,000 on AIM-9X Sidewinder missiles to shoot them down. They had to use the missile two times over Lake Superior since the first one didn't hit its target. In many people's opinion, the United States should be more prudent in spending taxpayer money. We are already pouring billions into fan war in Ukraine and

now we are targeting small unidentified objects launched by small labs.

The Americans have a very peculiar territorial psychology. Unlike the rest of the world, which has to contend with several neighbors that may be friendly or hostile, the US has oceans on its east, and west and it borders with two friendly countries, Canada and Mexico. This means that when any sort of object known to belong to a foreign country intrudes actual American airspace, the reaction of shock is greater than that which would be generated in other parts of the world. This mentality has to do with the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 which warned European powers not to interfere in the affairs of the Western Hemisphere.

It is not the first time unspecified flying objects have been observed in the United States. The Pentagon finally came out and told everyone that such objects have been seen over American airspace or by military aircraft numerous times over the past several decades. Most have no explanation and have varying descriptions and are perhaps not unlike the ones seen recently. It does not appear that the US has chosen to shoot them down in all cases, making the recent reaction one that signifies a new zero-tolerance stance that was not seen before.

There are of course theories about what these unidentified flying objects are. America has always had groups that believe in aliens and alien spacecraft. Naturally, online forums devoted to this topic are overflowing with theories. After all, if humans can send rovers to Mars, perhaps it

is not out of the question that other living creatures could send exploratory missions to Earth.

The truth of the matter, at least about the UFOs shot down over the weekend, is that no one knows. While it is possible that the US government has some idea, it appears unlikely that it would allow conjecture if it could lay the issue to rest for a very curious and transfixed American population. They, and everyone else in the world, expected 2023 to be an extraordinary year, but contact with aliens was likely not on anyone's list of predictions. It's an interesting life, after all.