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FLYING SAUCERS RIDDLE

SO far flying saucers have been treated by the majority of British people with incredulity and polite ridicule. But why?

I have studied all the reports available. I have seen photographs—those in the *Sunday Dispatch* last week were particularly clear—and I believe they are photographs of disc-type aircraft.

Earlier pictures published in the Spanish Press last April, and alleged to have been taken in the Balearic Islands, might have been anything and could have been a leg-pull. It is not always easy to sort the wheat from the chaff.

SECRET TRIALS

IN all the reports the objects fall into three groups. The most substantial of them come from America.

First group are those saucers which are capable of being explained away as glimpses of experimental trials of various devices.

Under this heading fall many of the objects seen in Southern U.S. and other areas where secret experiments are in progress. For this group I am prepared to accept the explanation given by the United States Army Air Force as "misinterpretations of conventional objects."

These conventional objects are giant experimental cosmic ray balloons which fill out to 100ft. long and 70ft. in diameter as they rise, radar target balloons capable of rising to 70,000ft. and trailing glittering aluminium foil strip, guided missiles, and stratospheric experiments from Los Alamos, whence rockets are stated to have reached 250 miles above the earth's surface.

Group Two consists of those apparently mysterious visitants which have led to wild surmises about space ships, missiles from other planets and inter-planetary shopping.

The descriptions are remarkably consistent and generally the object is either white or silver, darting about without directional

control or travelling at prodigious speeds, vanishing suddenly, and associated with brilliant light, fringes of fire or flames of peculiar colour and generally rotating or whirling.

From many parts of the world come these reports. The very fact that their descriptions are so consistent has led to their being dismissed as hallucinations, defective vision, or mild hysteria.

It might be that the solution of this riddle could lie in a very unorthodox approach, and I have wondered if there could possibly be turbulences set up in our atmosphere which could cause whirling "dust devils" of luminous gases caused by jet or other high speed experiments which might be responsible for the generation of small atomic whirlpools in the atmosphere.

Group Three reports suggest that the saucers are high speed aircraft of circular or disc shape travelling at speeds much higher than those attained by normal planes.

SAFETY SEARCH

THERE is no reason at all why annular and circular disc-like aircraft should not have been common objects at any time during the past 30 years.

The early history of these very unorthodox-looking aircraft was, ironically, based on a search for safety.

Before 1910 it had been shown that square and circular surfaces had very good non-stalling characteristics up to large angles. But when powered aircraft arrived it was found that the easiest way to minimise the losses due to the end slip of the air from the wing tips was to increase the span of wings while keeping them narrow.

This compromise brought other trouble. Early planes reached their stalling angle at some 15 degrees, and stalling must result in a dive since the only correction of a stall is a fight at some speed greater than the stalling speed.

Very early in the 1905-14 period there were people who would not accept that aircraft

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