

AF Action In Gas Leak Questioned

UA Physicist Slaps Delays

Dr. James E. McDonald, University of Arizona physicist, today charged the Air Force with being unprepared for emergencies such as occurred this week when poisonous fumes escaped from a Titan II missile complex north of Tucson.

Three motorists who drove through fuel oxidizer gas blown across the Florence Highway on Wednesday were released from hospitals today.

The nitrogen tetroxide gas, which is poisonous either on being breathed or touching the skin, leaked from the complex at 1 p.m. Wednesday.

"It appears that a confused half-hour went by before someone thought of checking winds to see whether tetroxide might be drifting towards the Florence Highway," McDonald, senior physicist in the UA Institute of Atmospheric Physics, said.

"Then, instead of immediately sending airmen to block traffic near the site, the slower step of asking the sheriff's office to set up a roadblock was taken.

"The result was that a still uncertain number of cars penetrated the toxic plume of tetroxide during that half hour.

"Imagine what might have happened had the same thing occurred at one of the several Titan sites on the far busier Benson, Nogales or Casa Grande highways."

McDonald said that emergency procedures should call for armed airmen equipped with gas masks to turn away traffic.

"One can only be reminded of similar Air Force lack of preparedness when a tank truck loaded with 3,500 gallons of tetroxide tipped over on May 8, 1963, out on Miracle Mile," said McDonald.

"One now wonders if ranchers and others living within a mile or so of the 18 Titan sites have ever been given any special instructions on coping with the hazards that might arise after such spillage accidents."

Air Force officials at Davis-Monthan AFB declined to comment today on its emergency procedures.

MOON, VENUS IN PHOTO

Michigan UFOs May Be Swamp Gas, Expert Says

By Wire Services

A special Air Force investigator said today that numerous sightings of unidentified flying objects in the Southern Michigan skies probably were the result of swamp gasses and not visitors from outer space.

"I emphasize . . . that I cannot prove in a court of law, that this is the full explanation of these sightings," said Dr. J. Allen Hynek, a scientific consultant for the Air Force who was brought to Michigan to investigate a week-long series of reports of mysterious celestial objects.

HYNEK ADDED at a Detroit news conference jammed by more than 60 newsmen:

"It appears very likely, however, that the combination of the conditions of this particular

winter — an unusually mild one in this area — and the particular weather conditions . . . were such as to have produced this unusual and puzzling display."

Hynek added that photos released to the press showing two lights in the sky over a series of street lights were "without any question" trails made as a result of a time exposure of the rising moon and the planet Venus.

Hynek said the photos were taken March 17 near Milan, Mich.

HYNEK NOTED that most of the sightings were near a swamp.

"A dismal swamp is a most unlikely place for a visit from outer space," Hynek said. "It is not a place where a helicopter would hover for several hours

or where a soundless secret device would likely be tested."

Most witnesses described the flying objects as having glowing lights, some red, green and yellow, appearing to move sideways.

Hynek said that such a sight is not to be seen frequently and, as a matter of fact, is of a unique character.

"I have never seen it myself," he said, "and I can easily understand the dismay of the witnesses who saw it and who sincerely and accurately described what they saw."

HYNEK SAID it seemed likely that present spring thaws released trapped gases resulting from decomposition of organic materials.

"It would seem to me that the association of the sightings with swamps in these particular cases is more than coincidence," Hynek declared. "No group of witnesses observed any craft coming to or going away from the swamps. The glow was localized there."

Hynek said that he wanted it clearly understood he was not making a blanket statement to cover the entire UFO phenomenon.

Scores of persons — from Maine to the Rockies — reported today that they, too, had seen unidentified flying objects (UFOs).

MRS. ROBERT Gorisek, of La Salle, Ill., said a triangular object with red, orange and white lights hovered over the car in which she and several other persons were riding as they drove home from work through several towns. It was with them more than an hour.

Richard Saimas, of Des Moines, said an object with a pinkish glow and a white center hovered about 200 feet over a drive-in near his home.

In Ohio, two deputy sheriffs saw a round, red glow "about as big as a car" just above the skyline in Toledo.

IN WISCONSIN, a series of objects ranging in size from a basketball to a baseball and in color from pinkish green to bluish green were reported at Wausau. Six policemen watched at Tomah, Wis., as an object changed colors from white to

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The Mao Mystery: Is He Ill Or Aloof?

By FORREST EDWARDS

HONG KONG — (AP) — Mao Tze-tung's four-month absence from public functions plus a greatly stepped up press-radio campaign to keep his name before the public has some Western experts here believing the Chinese leader is seriously ill.

They believe other Peking leaders are worried that growing public awareness of Mao's absence because of failing health could lead to increasing unrest among the Chinese people.

Others, however, speculate that Red China's operating hierarchy is debating major policy changes, including possible rapprochement with Moscow. They believe Mao may be deliberately staying aloof from that debate in order to re-emerge as the untarnished father-leader of Chinese Communism once China's new policy direction is determined.

Since Mao dropped from public view four months ago, Peking's official Peoples Daily has more than doubled the headlines and space it has devoted to his "thoughts" and "teaching." Other papers and radio stations on the Communist

mainland have similarly doubled their efforts to keep Mao's name before the public.

To the Mao-is-sick group the simultaneous public disappearance of Lo Jui-ching, considered here to be the actual operating head of Peking's national defense ministry, adds weight to the theory of Mao's illness. Lo is the only military man among the nine members of the Chinese Communist Party's central secretariat, and his apparent absence from Peking is taken by some to mean that he is with Mao and acting as Mao's liaison man with others of the Communist hierarchy.

Mao and Lo made their last known public appearances Nov. 26, when they conferred with a Cambodian military delegation. Since then, neither China's press nor radio has reported a public appearance by either man.

China observers here believe Mao probably is at Hangchow, where he is reported to have a stronghold guarded by an elite military unit under Lo's direct command.

Although Mao has dropped from public view several times before, none has been this long or this complete.

UFOs May Be Gas From Swamps

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green as it pitched and yawed in the sky, they said.

A Bangor, Maine, man told authorities he fired his pistol at a glowing object -- and hit it.

"I could hear the elderberry bushes scraping as the thing came toward me," said John King, 22. He said he fired four times and the object, described as about 60 feet long, zoomed skyward.

A truck driver told police in Niles, Mich., that a strange blinking object shadowed his truck for 15 miles early today.

The driver, Ralph Conte, Akron, Ohio, said the object had red, green and white lights and followed silently alongside his truck as he drove from Cassopolis, Mich., to Niles. Conte said the object slowed when he slowed, blinked its lights when he blinked his, then finally veered away.