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**INTELLIGENCE
AND SECURITY**

05 JUNE 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO) Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP) Case Analysis Update: Western U.S. Event "Orbs Launching Orbs"

References: (a) <https://www.war.gov/ufo/#Western-US-Event>, Incident 1 of 4, VIRIN: 260508-D-D0360-1052, 08-MAY 2026.

1. Executive Summary.

This memorandum summarizes the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office's (AARO) ongoing analysis of a reported incident near a sensitive national security site in the western United States involving unidentified anomalous phenomena (UAP) over a period of two days in October 2023. As of June 2026, the case remains unresolved.

2. Incident Summary.¹

Over a period of two days in October 2023, six federal law enforcement special agents reported observing "orbs launching other orbs," near a sensitive national security site in the western United States at approximately dusk. Each team of two agents reported observing phenomena with similar morphological features and performance characteristics from multiple viewing angles.

The phenomena's most distinctive reported feature was the repeating nature of their pattern of behavior, in which a luminous orange "mother orb" appeared to produce smaller red "orbs," one after another, multiple times over a period of several hours. Reporters described the orange "mother orbs" as appearing for one to two seconds, releasing a cluster of two to four red "orbs," and subsequently disappearing. The reporters characterized the behavior of the red "orbs" as anomalous, describing varied kinematic profiles including seemingly coordinated horizontal motion and apparent changes in altitude. The red "orbs" reportedly persisted for several seconds before disappearing, however, in at least one instance, the agents described a red "orb" as remaining stationary above a ridgeline for several hours. The reporters also described the phenomena as "silent." The agents provided consistent accounts using similar language to characterize their experiences and the apparent behavior of both the red and orange "orbs."

3. Analytic Factors.

¹ AARO's use of source-derived descriptive and evaluative language in this summary is intended to preserve the integrity of narrative testimony as provided by first-hand observers.

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- a. The reporting agents did not collect video footage, photographic imagery, or other technical data during the incident. Human capacity for optical estimation regarding the distance, size, speed, and direction of travel of unreferenced phenomena in low-light conditions is constrained by intrinsic biological and perceptual limitations. As a standard analytic practice, AARO considers the influence of such limitations when assessing narrative descriptions of a phenomenon's morphological and performance characteristics. In this case, AARO assesses that contextual factors supersede those limitations, and that the nature of the reported incident warrants further investigation. These factors include:
 - i. The close alignment of the phenomena's reported morphological features and kinematic profiles with those of other reported incidents in the western United States region.
 - ii. AARO's favorable assessment of the reporting agents' contextual awareness of the operational environment and overall familiarity with U.S. military systems.
 - iii. The high degree of consistency in the agents' narrative descriptions of potentially anomalous features, as seen from multiple viewing angles.
- b. Due to a lack of instrument-measured distance data, AARO cannot determine whether the phenomena's reported silence corresponds to an inherent characteristic or to acoustic attenuation.
- c. The total number of orange "mother orbs" is unclear based upon the narrative reporting. As described, AARO finds two interpretations plausible:
 - i. A single orange "mother orb" periodically "launching" smaller red "orbs."
 - ii. Multiple orange "mother orbs" periodically "launching" smaller red "orbs."

4. Current Case Disposition and Hypotheses.

Approximately 40 percent of the reported phenomena lack a plausible explanation after first stage analysis and thus remain unresolved. To evaluate this incident, AARO cross-correlated the agents' narrative accounts against commercial and military flight logs, radar data, spatial estimates, and Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) data. AARO considered several hypotheses to account for the currently unresolved component of the phenomena.

- a. Misidentified Military Aircraft Exhaust (Ruled Out): The reported characteristics do not align with those of military aircraft exhaust. Though military aircraft were present in the airspace, their altitudes were too high for standard exhaust to appear as orange "orbs." This hypothesis is also inconsistent with the agents' characterization of the phenomena as "silent," the reported loitering behavior, and the apparent "launching" of red "orbs."
- b. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) (Unlikely): Agents reported that, in at least one case, red "orbs" persisted over a period of several hours. A loitering time of several hours

exceeds the standard battery capacity and operational limits of typical military and commercially available multi-rotor UAV systems.

- c. Military Aircraft Dispensing Flares (Partially Plausible):
 - i. *Supporting Factors:* Historical flight logs confirm that U.S. military aircraft operating in the area were equipped with, and actively deployed, infrared countermeasure flares as a component of a standard exercise. The reported morphology and behavior of these phenomena align with known characteristics of certain military infrared flares. The phenomena's position relative to the observers, perceived direction of travel, and time of observation strongly align with historical radar and ADS-B data, suggesting that approximately 60 percent of the reported activity is plausibly attributable to military aircraft. The agents, who are professionally familiar with the visual characteristics of military flares, stated that the phenomena did not exhibit those characteristics. However, the visual and behavioral characteristics of the specific types of flares carried by the military aircraft operating in the area differ from those of standard illumination flares.
 - ii. *Contradictory Factors:* For the remaining 40 percent of reported observations, radar and ADS-B data indicate that no known aircraft were active within the observers' estimated line-of-sight from the ground. In at least one case, the agents' report of a red "orb" remaining stationary for several hours is physically incompatible with the burn-time and descent rate of any known military flare.
- d. U.S. Capability Deconfliction (Blue Force) (Plausible, inconclusive): AARO conducted a comprehensive review of programs and activities across the Department of War and the Intelligence Community to ascertain whether the time, date, location, and reported features of the phenomena align with those of any U.S. developmental program, test event, or operational capability. AARO assesses that the characteristics described in the agents' narrative account align with those of certain U.S. military technologies. However, historical records are inconclusive regarding whether those technologies were present at the time and place of the reported incident. Furthermore, while each reported characteristic shares features with known U.S. military systems, no single Blue Force capability fully accounts for all the phenomena's reported characteristics.
- e. Foreign Intelligence Activity (Red Force) (Highly Unlikely): AARO consulted with partners in the Intelligence Community to assess the likelihood that the reported phenomena indicate the presence of foreign intelligence activities. While AARO cannot definitively rule out the deployment of entirely novel foreign collection platforms, the reported kinematic profiles diverge significantly enough from those of known adversary systems that AARO assesses this hypothesis as highly unlikely.
- f. Phenomenological & Environmental Factors (Unlikely): AARO consulted with subject matter experts to explore possible natural phenomena whose characteristics may account for those of the reported phenomena. Potential attributions included:
 - i. *Meteorological phenomena.* Weather conditions were generally inconsistent with those necessary to produce rare phenomena such as ball lightning or sprites.

- ii. *Atmospheric anomalies, (e.g., temperature inversion and refractive effects).*
Weather conditions were generally clear, with seasonable temperatures and typical levels of light pollution for the area. AARO assesses as unlikely that such conditions would contribute to misperceptions of a phenomenon's physical or kinematic features.
 - iii. *Space-based phenomena, (e.g., stars, planets, meteors, satellite flaring, rocketry).*
The agents' diverse viewing angles make it highly unlikely that misidentified celestial bodies account for the phenomena. In instances in which reporters described stationary "loitering" behavior, misidentified celestial bodies are more plausible, though still unlikely. Attribution to meteors or other ephemeral space-based phenomena, including satellite flaring, is inconsistent with the reported persistence of at least one of the red "orbs" over a period of several hours. Bolides, for example, typically exhibit a characteristic tail, which is inconsistent with the reported morphology of the "mother orbs."
- g. Unrecognized Technology (Pending): AARO's preliminary exclusion-based hypothesis is that, given the otherwise unexplained kinematic and physical characteristics described in narrative reports, unrecognized technology may account for up to 40 percent of the phenomena associated with this incident. However, this provisional assessment is based solely upon narrative testimony, as well as the elimination of competing hypotheses, and is unsubstantiated by technical data or physical evidence.

5. Next Steps.

AARO assesses that the features described by the reporting agents are sufficiently anomalous to warrant continued investigation into the nature of the underlying incident. AARO intends to integrate scientific modeling capabilities from partner agencies within the Federal Government, expertise from scientific and academic institutions, and insights from multi-domain, multispectral data exploitation techniques to inform its assessment of this and other reported UAP cases in the western United States region. AARO will continue to update its analytic tradecraft to incorporate the best scientific and intelligence analysis practices to resolve anomalies with higher confidence.

AARO will also seek opportunities to broaden its relationships with partners possessing relevant technical and domain expertise to enhance its ability to efficiently deconflict Blue and Red Force programs and activities, as well as to optimize data collection protocols to incorporate more diverse sources. AARO may revise its assessment and provide updates if additional intelligence and data sources become available.



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