



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## UFOs shot down: An Extraterrestrial Charade? The last chance before the nuclear Apocalypse

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### Abstract

In February 2023, the airspace of two countries in North America and China was the scene of a series of UFO sightings, resulting in the proven shooting down of one of these objects by the United States Air Force. Reportedly, one of the object was identified as a balloon of Chinese origin, while the others remain unknown. With respect to this, the Latin American Academy of Scientific Ufology (LAASU) organized an international meeting to discuss this subject on March 18, 2023 and five professionals from different academic fields were invited to give their points of view. With over 40 years dedicated to Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO) research, Dr. Acosta Navarro, LAASU's Director, supported the that hypothesis of extraterrestrial manifestation would be the best explanation for the observed UFO phenomena shot down, which could represent a charade or puzzle to be interpreted. The development of this article within LAASU was prioritized by the transcendence and contemporaneity of the phenomenon and was named the "Operation Ray of Zeus". Ten points of argumentation are presented to support this hypothesis. We propose that the downed UFOs could be a consequence of direct or indirect actions by Extraterrestrial Intelligences, which can be interpreted as a charade, intending to raise awareness and reflection about the current critical moment of risk of self-destruction, highlighting our technological limitations and showing our vulnerability.

**Keywords:** Extraterrestrial Intelligence; Political science; Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP); Unidentified Flying Object (UFO)

### 1. Introduction

In February 2023, the airspace of two countries in North America and China was the scene of a series of Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO) or Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP) sightings, resulting in the proven shooting down of one of these objects by the United States Air Force. Reportedly, one of the objects was identified as a balloon of Chinese origin, while the other five remain unknown.[1]

The event has rattled global geopolitics. The United States claims that the balloon shot down by an F-22 fighter jet on February 4, 2023, the first in the series, was a Chinese spy balloon (ChBa-down). China acknowledges the origin but denies that it was a spy balloon, claiming it was just a civilian research balloon.[2]

With respect to this, the Latin American Academy of Scientific Ufology (LAASU), a non-profit, non-governmental organization founded in Sao Paulo (Brazil) dedicated to study and research of UFOs, organized an international meeting

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to discuss this subject on March 18, 2023. Five professionals from different academic fields were invited to give their points of view (Figure 1).



**Figure 1** Poster announcing the international virtual meeting “Forum OVNIS derrubados o que são e que representam?”, March, 2023, São Paulo, Brazil.

Several hypotheses were addressed during the meeting. In the lecture by the Brazilian journalist Agnes Franco, MSc, who was inspired by the recalibration of the radars, and offered hypotheses more related to human geopolitics.[3] She highlighted those images from the fighter jet cameras that have yet to be released, which raises suspicions, since it is well-known that the fighters have cameras. Also, for credibility, one would expect the country to prove what it claims to have found through images.

In his presentation, the Brazilian lawyer Flori Tasca, PhD, stated that he believed the objects to be of human origin. One of his comments was that the moment the U.S. identifies the first balloon, it ceases to be UAP or UFO because it has already been identified as a terrestrial artifact. He cites Toni Inajar's article [4] on identifying a UFO, for instance, impossible angles for human objects, emission of strong lights, sudden change in altitude, etc. Tasca argued that none of the patterns presented in that article have been observed in any of the objects cited in this article. In agreement with Agnes Franco, he concludes that these objects apparently have more to do with geopolitics than exopolitics.

Italian journalist Candida Mammoliti criticizes how the security forces of countries deal with the UFO phenomenon and claims that according to the Canadian government's research it would not represent a threat.[5] Despite this, the approaches of many states continue to be warlike and violent. She also cites the La Joya (Peru) incident, when over a thousand people and a pilot identified a cream-colored, dome-shaped, 600-meter half-circular object, and there was a military assault that fired 64 shells.[6] The object could have absorbed some; others fell to earth. Therefore, from this incident, one can conclude that it is complex, if not impossible, to bring down such objects. She argues that these are not geopolitical phenomena since they have been sighted in several countries, in different political contexts, and with other descriptions. According to Candida, like others ufologists, if such objects, sighted for millennia, were dangerous, this would already be clear.

The Brazilian medical doctor Daniel C. Gamini advocates that the UFO phenomenon should be "...studied, in a methodical, logical and standardized manner, with transparency and cooperation among the various international entities...". He argues that millions of dollars are spent on military matters which could be allocated to scientific research. Gamini recalls that between the 1950s and 1970s, academia did not ignore ufology as it does today and cites several researchers from different fields who have researched the subject, citing an article whose main argument is that the movement of UFOs is nothing like human technologies, even reaching the speed of Mach 60.[7] The doctor cites another medical

article cross-referencing over 30,000 witnesses to the phenomenon and their mental health, finding that most enjoyed full mental health.[8] Gamini also cites several statements by U.S. authorities claiming the possibility of intelligent life visiting Earth, such as Senator Marco Rubio, John Brennan, and John Ratcliffe.

John Budrys, a senior American UFO researcher, despite not being a panelist, had a significant point during the comments when he argued in favor of logic, calling for detailed observation on how the advance of human technology and the development of UFO in governance can be a trap if researches do not have its feet grounded. UFO researchers need to be scientific and conservative, and not be tempted into speculations if they are to maintain credibility. There is plenty of factual data clearly supporting the reality of UFOs, without tainting the subject with unsupported ideas. Of course, armed with facts, researchers need to try to conceive of what larger picture and meanings are indicated. However, any pure speculations need to be clearly presented as such. He applauded Dr. Navarro's now published careful studies as solid attempts to introduce scientific rigor to the difficult by nature evaluation of extraterrestrial contacts with human beings. Budrys currently is working to help experiencers of extraterrestrial contact as a member of the Experiencer Support Team from the Organization for Paranormal Understanding and Support" (OPUS- EST).[9] In addition, Budrys has a website to provide this same service to alleged experiencers of extraterrestrial contact.[10]

Finally, in the meeting, the last lecturer was the Peruvian/Brazilian scientist Dr. Julio Acosta-Navarro, PhD. (Figure 2).The arguments he presented are the main argument of this paper. His claims will be presented in the following chapters, with some observations added later as the topic matures.



**Figure 2** Dr. Acosta-Navarro lecturing in the Auditorium of the “Camara Municipal de São Paulo”, a public governmental entity during the meeting “Seminário Científico: OVNIS, o misterio do século XX desvendado...!”, Folha de São Paulo, March 25th, 2017 in São Paulo, Brazil

Dr. Acosta Navarro, LAASU's Director, maintains that the hypothesis of extraterrestrial manifestation would be the best explanation for the observed UFO phenomena shot down in February of this year. The facts would be a consequence of direct or indirect action with global reach by Extraterrestrial Intelligences, which could represent a charade or puzzle to be interpreted to raise awareness and provoke reflection about the critical moment that humanity is currently going through.

## 2. Methodology

Dr. Acosta-Navarro is Director/Founder of the Latin American Academy of Scientific Ufology (LAASU) from its creation in 2011. He also is a medical doctor and university professor from the School of Medicine of Sao Paulo University, holding a PhD degree in Medical Sciences and has a second PhD degree in Social Sciences, both from the Sao Paulo University. Additionally, he has more than 44 years of experience in the Ufology field (Figure 3).



**Figure 3** Last face-to-face meeting of the team of members and collaborators of Latin American Academy of Scientific Ufology (LAASU), a non-governmental organization non-profit, in São Paulo, June 2023, Brazil.

Dr. Acosta Navarro gave his first impressions of the downed UFO phenomenon in an interview on the Epimetheus Project with the Internet channel “Universo Paralelo OVNI” on February 21, 2023, the same year the Project Epimetheus research and results were published in a scientific journal.[11] Such research on case studies of alleged Close Encounters of the Fifth Degree (CE5<sup>th</sup>K) demonstrated that some of these 'contactees' could be considered of high probability to be authentic, and that in these contacts, information in several fields of knowledge was passed by Extraterrestrial Intelligences with revolutionary potential for humanity.[12] Days after his research was published, Dr. Acosta Navarro reinforced his views in the interview mentioned above about the phenomena observed in February.

The development of this article within LAASU was prioritized by the transcendence and contemporaneity of the phenomenon and was named the "Operation Ray of Zeus". It was used information from official entities, communication mass media, documents from the LAASU, published scientific papers and virtual networks. All the sources were duly referenced in the moment of citation.

## 3. Results and discussion

The main hypothesis of this paper is the possibility that the objects shot down during last February have extraterrestrial origins, even though official statements move in the opposite direction.

The following are ten points of argumentation to support this hypothesis.

### 3.1. Argument 1: Operation “False Flag” or other official geopolitical argumentation does not explain the phenomena

The main official explanation of the recent UFO overflights and shootdowns is that there is no convincing and detailed explanation of their nature. However, some scholars suggest it could be a possible 'false flag operation' or a consequence of geopolitical actions involving mainly the United States and China.

An act can be understood as a 'false flag operation' when the victim of the act - or allies - is the generator, even if against himself, giving clues or directly accusing enemies of being the authors. The term can refer to initiatives by individuals, non-governmental organizations, or countries.[13] According to David Silbey, a historian at Cornell University, a 'false

flag operation' was the trigger for the beginning of World War II, when the Gestapo attacked its transmission tower, Gleiwitz, pretending to be a Polish offensive. In the staging, several Germans lost their lives, such as a farmer who was shot dead as if he was the saboteur, and concentration camp prisoners killed in the guise of German guards as if they were victims of the alleged terrorist.[14] Another war start marked by a 'false flag operation' was the one that occurred in Vietnam in the 1960s. According to Lieutenant Commander Pat Paterson of the U.S. Navy, after 40 years of speculation about the attack on the destroyer USS Maddox in the Gulf of Tonkin, thanks to audiotapes, declassified documents, and uncovered facts, it is possible today to say that what led the U.S. Congress to vote in favor of the U.S. plunging into the Vietnam war was no more than a fabricated scene.[15] Professor Scott Radnitz also reminds us of the episode involving the conflict between Russia and Chechnya, when, after a series of bombings, several people were arrested carrying explosives as if they were Chechen militants, which was later proved to be Russian security agents, i.e., one more staging of severe conflicts.[14]

In any case, a false flag operation in the episode that is the subject of this article would have little logic in light of the geopolitical context of war instability, especially by the subsequent position of the U.S. government. No retaliation due to UFOs associated with the Chinese government was observed, from the American government which hurts the historical narrative of false flags. At the same time, such an operation would not be necessary to trigger a possible U.S. attack on China since the geopolitical situation between these powers is in crisis due to the critical tension in the South China Sea and the conflict over Taiwan since before the February events.

As journalist Liu Zhen points out, a group of think tanks in Beijing pointed out in March that U.S. military activities have practically doubled, including those involving aircraft carriers and training with allies. In the South China Sea, for example, in 2021, there were 12 exercises at sea. This year, as of this report's publication, there were 22 bomber outings and 11 nuclear submarine passages, according to U.S. reports. The Chinese believe that the target of the exercises is China. Scholars warn of the risk of an imminent conflict.[16] In addition, the war for dollar hegemony has recently helped to escalate this situation. There is no need to create false pretexts to start reprisals because the situation is already critical enough. Furthermore, it is a fact that there is a dispute over global economic hegemony and that China and Russia are opposed to this hegemony, strongly led by the United States, and that dependence on the dollar is being questioned.[17]

On February 12, Melissa Dalton, Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Defense, said that due to the Chinese balloon (ChBa-down), greater attention was being paid to radar and that this would explain, "in part," the increase in detected objects.[18] However, this official explanation leaves many questions unanswered. On the same day, China announced that it was about to shoot down a UFO in Shandong (3UFOdown), a province near Rizhao in the Yellow Sea, even alerting fishermen to watch out for their safety.[19]

In order to more clearly understand the chronological sequence of the events we presented Table 1 with the description of the six objects detected and/or shot down in February 2023, that are commented on this paper.

**Table 1** Description of the six objects detected and/or shut down in February 2023, in the airspace of USA, Canada and China. Final location based on official governmental USA and media information

<b>Nome of object (Code) / Information</b>	<b>Chinese Balloon shot down (ChBa-down)</b>	<b>First UFO shot down (1UFODown)</b>	<b>Second UFO shot down (2UFODown)</b>	<b>UFO detected by radar (UFOradar)</b>	<b>Third UFO shot down (3UFODown)</b>	<b>Fourth UFO shot down (4UFODown)</b>
Place	South Carolina coast (USA)	Alaskan coast (USA)	Yukon (Canada)	Montana (USA)	Shandong province, near Yellow Sea (China)	Lake Huron, Michigan (USA)
Date	Feb 04, Saturday	Feb 10, Friday	Feb 11, Saturday	Feb 11, Saturday	Feb12, Sunday	Feb 12, Sunday
Local time and (GMT)	2:30 p.m. EST (1830 GMT)	1:45 p.m. EST (1745 GMT)	3:41 EST (2041 GMT)	Not informed	09:57am EST (1357 GMT)	2:42 p.m. EST (1842 GMT)
Object identified	Balloon Recognized from China	No	No	Radar anomaly	No	No
Altitude	60,000 feet	40,000 feet	40,000 feet	Not informed	Not informed	20,000 feet
Shape	Balloon was estimated to be up to 200 feet tall, with a weight of more than 2,000 pounds.	About the size of a small car but not similar in size or shape to the ChBa-down	Smaller in size and cylindrical	NA	Not informed	Octagonal structure with strings hanging off
Jet interceptor	An F-22 Raptor using an AIM-9x Sidewinder missile	An F-22 fired an AIM-9x Sidewinder missile	An F-22 fired an AIM9x Sidewinder missile	Fighter jets were sent to the area and did not identify any object to correlate to the radar hits	Not informed. The effective hootdown of the UFO was not confirmed.	An F-16, firing an AIM9x Sidewinder missile
Reason given for shooting down	The large intruder was part of a fleet of balloons developed to conduct	It posed a reasonable threat to the safety of civilian flight	The object had unlawfully entered Canadian airspace and posed a reasonable threat to the safety of civilian flight	NA	Local maritime authorities were preparing to shoot it down, reminding fishermen to be safe via messages	It was not assessed to be a kinetic military threat to anything on the ground but it was a safety flight hazard and a threat due to its

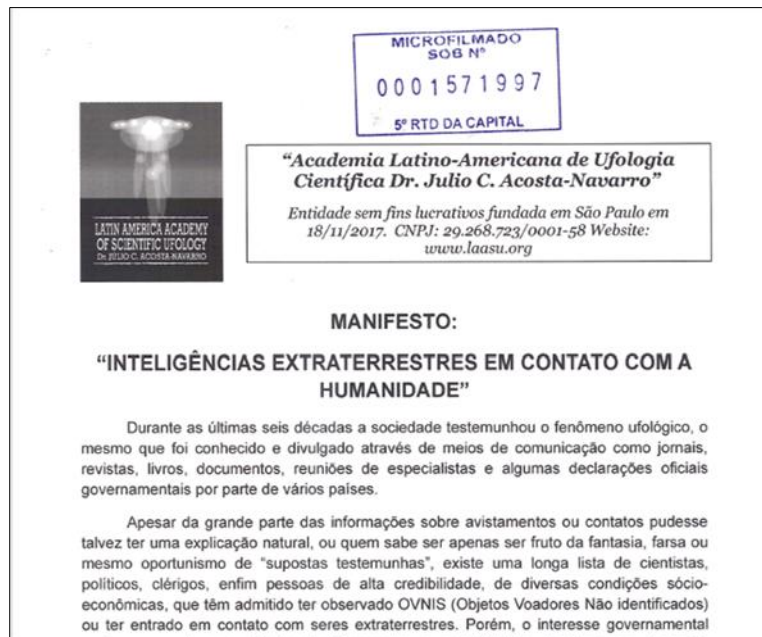
	surveillance operations					potential surveillance capabilities
Recovery effort	Yes	Recovery activities were occurring on the ice as allowed by Arctic weather, limited daylight, and other conditions	<i>"Canadian Forces will now recover and analyze the wreckage of the object"</i> Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said.	NA	Not informed	The location of the shoot down was chosen both to limit risks to people and to boost the chance of recovering debris.
Information about debris rescued	Some wreckage from balloon was gathered from Atlantic Ocean's surface.	No	No	NA	Not informed	No
Evidence: photographic of the object, the shooting down or debris	Object: yes Shot down: Yes Debris: yes	None	None	NA	None	None

**3.2. Argument 2: Reality of the UFO phenomenon, which has a physical expression, allows it to be considered a possible cause when not fully explained by a natural or artificial human cause.**

The UFO phenomena in its modern phase (considering the report of pilot Kenneth Arnold on June 24, 1947, Washington State) was widely known for its strong casuistry that was covered up by governments and neglected by the academic community until recently. The evidence accumulated in the last decades about UFOs, obviously discarding the false ones, has demonstrated their reality, and even recently, different personalities and governmental and academic entities have publicly declared it. Except for some published works of scientists such as James Mac Donald, Allen Hynek [20], Jaques Vallee [21] and Dr. Acosta-Navarro [22,23], we can consider that only in December 2017, ufology gained consensual recognition with the publication by the “New York Times” of encounters of American jets with UFOs and a subsequent recognition by the American government of the authenticity of the evidence. In that time, the “New York Times” published three videos of UFOs. The first of the videos, known as the “GIMBAL footage” shows a 2004 encounter near San Diego between a Navy fighter jet and an UAP. [24]

Dr. Acosta-Navarro launched a “LAASU Manifest” [25] at an international event on October 26, 2019, in São Paulo, putting seven affirmative points on the state of the art of UFO knowledge, within which some would be confirmed with later events (Figure 4). The first point affirmed the physical nature of UFOs, and the sixth point the suspicion that some governments were aware of their reality. Textually it was put that:

*“The phenomena or manifestations of Extraterrestrial Intelligences are real and can have a physical and material expression allowing these to be investigated under the scientific method in addition to having a psychic expression.”*



**Figure 4** Document “Manifest LAASU 2019” launched in the international meeting “Encontro Internacional de Exopolitica: o Fenomeno OVNI rumo as Nações Unidas”. Registered in notary of Sao Paulo, Brazil, October 2019, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

After that, in June, 2021, the Pentagon admitted the authenticity of these encounters and released an unclassified version of a report investigating 144 cases by the US Defense Department’s Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program (AATIP), an agency created in 2007 but only publicly known in 2017. American intelligence officials still cannot explain the unusual movements of the aerial phenomena witnessed by Navy pilots in recent years. These have mystified scientists and the military, according to senior administration officials briefed on the findings of the highly anticipated government report. The report determined that the vast majority of more than 144 incidents over the past two decades did not originate from any American military or other advanced U.S. government technology, the officials said.[26] The report concedes that much about the observed phenomena remains difficult to explain, including their acceleration, as well as ability to change direction and submerge. Some of the incidents were recorded on video, including one taken by a plane’s camera in early 2015, that shows an object zooming over the ocean waves, which caused the pilots to question what they were watching.



In the American congressional hearing in 2022, Pentagon officials testified, and admitted the authenticity of encounters of UFOs with jets. An unclassified version of a report investigating several cases was released again admitting that the vast majority of the cases did not originate from American military or other advanced US government technology. [27]

In addition to the 144 UAP reports cited above, recently unclassified information was released from the American government showing there have been 247 new reports and another 119 that were either since discovered or reported after the preliminary assessment's time period. This totals 510 UAP reports as of 30 August 2022. UAP events continue to occur in restricted or sensitive airspace, highlighting possible concerns for safety of flight or adversary collection activity. [28] Here we can acknowledge the efforts of journalist Leslie Kean that was probably the first major writer to forcefully cite the same flight safety concerns in her book several years ago. She has been a major figure in several efforts to get officials to look seriously into UFOs.[29]

On Wednesday, July 31, 2023, members of an independent NASA panel studying UFOs, or what the U.S. government now terms UAP for "unidentified anomalous phenomena," said in their first public meeting that scant high-quality data and a lingering stigma pose the greatest barriers to unraveling such mysteries. The 16-member body, formed last year among leading experts from scientific fields ranging from physics to astrobiology, held a four-hour session streamed live on a NASA webcast to deliberate their preliminary findings ahead of issuing a report expected later this summer. The panel's chairman, astrophysicist David Spergel, said his team's role was "*not to resolve the nature of these events but rather to give NASA a roadmap*" to guide future analysis. The greatest challenge panel members cited, however, was a dearth of scientifically reliable methods for documenting UFOs, typically sightings of what appear as objects moving in ways that defy the bounds of known technologies and laws of nature.[30] Despite the scientists concluding that there is "*absolutely no convincing evidence*" of extraterrestrial activity in any sightings to date, this doesn't mean the panel has ruled out aliens, military adversaries or any other explanation — just that of the 800 or so sightings of strange flying objects or other phenomena that defy easy explanation, the data are simply not sufficient to draw any definitive conclusions.[31]

Dr. Acosta Navarro believes that the objects recently shot down in February of 2023 could be low-tech, unmanned alien probes, ships, decoys, or toys. These were unlike the incidents of UFO sightings with carrier jets where other patterns of speed and flight capabilities have been observed, and not similar to any known human craft.

### **3.3. Argument 3: Contradictions of US government officials trying to rule out extraterrestrial origin without being able to explain the nature of UFOs.**

On Monday 13 of February, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said at Monday's daily press briefing: "*No sign of alien activity, the White House says. "There is no – again, no — indication of aliens or extraterrestrial activity with these recent takedowns"*[32] From this official statement, we can consider two key points. First, it states that the objects are not extraterrestrial spaceships, but without explaining what they are. It is not logical, rational, or scientific. On the other hand, assuming that the US government is accurately stating the objects are not extraterrestrial, it can then be assumed that the US government is aware of what extraterrestrial ships are like to be able to claim that these are not. From this statement, one could deduce that the US government is aware of the reality of the presence of extraterrestrial intelligence on Earth.

These statements also contrast with others. For instance, that from Pentagon Press Secretary Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder from Friday 10 February, talking about that day's shootdown: "*We have no further details about the object at this time, including any description of its capabilities, purpose, or origin.*"

The most impactful statement, made one day before Karine's statement, was from General Glen Van Herck. When a reporter asked him on Sunday 12 in February 2023, if the U.S. military has ruled out potential actions by extraterrestrials, he did not dismiss the idea. "*I haven't ruled out anything*" he said. "*At this point, we continue to assess every threat or potential threats unknown that approaches North America with an attempt to identify it. It could be a gaseous type of balloon inside a structure or it could be some type of a propulsion system. But clearly, they're — they're able to stay aloft.*" [32]

Another fact to comment on is the radar detection of another UFO in Montana (UFO radar), which was to be the fourth in the sequence and which again led to the order for US jets to intersect. However, when they arrived at the point of detection, they found nothing and concluded that a radar anomaly had caused it.

The North American Aerospace Defense Command, a joint effort to monitor the skies by the U.S. and Canada, issued a statement late Saturday 11 February saying it had detected a "radar anomaly" over Montana, but nothing unusual was

found when fighter jets were sent to the area. North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) issued a temporary flight restriction in conjunction with the FAA on Saturday in central Montana near the town of Havre, *"to ensure the safety of air traffic in the area,"* according to the agencies.[33] The senator Matt Rosendale questioned the claim that it was a "radar anomaly" on his Twitter [34]: *I am in constant communication with NORCOM and they have just advised me that they have confidence there IS an object and it WAS NOT an anomaly. I am waiting now to receive visual confirmation. Our nation's security is my priority.*

This point makes us speculate whether the UFO was, in fact, real and that it perhaps fled or withdrew from the range of the American jets. We may wonder if there was, in fact, other undisclosed information.

Another point of contradiction is the information that these UFOs produced magnetic interference in the war jets. F-22 pilots from US fighter aircraft who saw and shot down an object threatening airspace over Alaska on Friday 10 in February 2023 (1UFOdown), said it interfered with their sensors and had no propulsion system. Prior to shooting down the object, Kirby told reporters, the pilots of the F-22 jets that took it down circled it and determined it was unmanned — and lacked the ability to maneuver midair and change its speed like previous balloons have been seen doing.[35] In addition, CNN reported an anonymous source with knowledge of the directions said the pilots shared conflicting observations about the object, including whether it had interfered with their systems, and said that they could not explain how it stayed in the air.[36]

Another official reported that in the UFO shoot-down episode at Lake Huron, the F-16 fighter jet did not shoot down the UFO initially with the first missile but only with the second. How could a fighter jet miss with a more modern AIM-9x Sidewinder missile? What would be the explanation?

These contradictions could indicate that the US government may be withholding information?. Or it simply reflects the different points of interpretation of officials not having a consensus on the nature of the phenomenon. We can also consider that there could be is another possibility for this secrecy not involving extraterrestrial action. If these were all Chinese balloons sent into our airspace to test our reactions and capabilities, they certainly learned a lot. First, that we are very careful, or at least Biden is very careful, not to risk any harm to Americans on the ground. Second that the Montana radar system is not very accurate at picking up objects. Third, that Sidewinder missiles are not 100% accurate, despite their high cost. The Chinese probably learned other valuable things by simply floating a couple balloons over the US and carefully noting our reactions. The embarrassment over these last two failures may be why the military does not want to publicly speak further on these balloons. However, this rationale does not explain all the arguments presented here.

### **3.4. Argument 4: Incomplete information suggesting withholding communication**

Several pieces of information given by US government officials are incomplete. Despite the jets being near these UFOs, there are no photographs, video footage, or captured objects. As General Ryder reported about the first UFO of Alaska (1UFOdown).

The object was about the size of a small car, the general said, and did not resemble in any way the Chinese surveillance balloon shot down off the coast of South Carolina earlier this week. *"We have no further details about the object at this time, including any description of its capabilities, purpose or origin,"* he said. Two F-22s flying out of Joint Base Elmendorf in Alaska, took down the object. The one missile shot was an AIM-9X Sidewinder. *"We have HC-130, HH-60 and CH-47 aircraft participating in that recovery,"* the press secretary said.[37]

The second UFO (2UFOdown) in Canada was cylindrical, smaller than the Chinese balloon, but without further details. In fact, this second UFO was very different from the detailed information given of the original Chinese balloon shot down (ChBa-down) on February 4, 2023 that is not being considered a UFO.

In the case of the third UFO shootdown at Lake Huron in North America (4UFOdown), it is described as having no identifiable cargo or intelligent control, suggesting the jets were very close. Again, no further details about the objects were given. The object, which was flying at about 20,000 feet, had an octagonal structure with strings hanging off it but had no discernible payload, U.S. officials said.[32]

If the pilots saw the UFOs up close, they could give more information. Why was it not done? The seemingly incomplete information could suggest that the United States is covering up information critical to understanding the nature and origin of the phenomena observed.

### **3.5. Argument 5: Rescue suspended and paradoxical because they were shot down with chances to recover and did not recover.**

One of the strongest points questioning and weakening the official version is that the rescue was suspended early and still shows no trace of any downed UFO. According to US officials, the operation was terminated on February 17, 2023, due to weather and access difficulties to the sites.[38] If all UFOs were shot down with the same protocols, with jets and missiles, with the planning of the location to be shot down to facilitate rescue without harm to the population, why was only the Chinese one filmed, shot down, and rescued and shown to the public? [39] Why didn't they continue the search for the others? Did they find the remains and not publicize them? Did they not take them down? These are legitimate questions, given the lack of logic in the facts.

Recently in June 2023, United States Air Force (USAF) officer and former intelligence official David Grusch publicly claimed that unnamed officials told him that the U.S. federal government maintains a highly secretive UFO recovery program and is in possession of "non-human" spacecraft and "dead pilots." In 2022, Grusch filed a whistleblower complaint with the U.S. Office of the Intelligence Community Inspector General (ICIG) to support his plan to share classified information with the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.[40]

We can hypothesize that the United States government may have recovered physical evidence demonstrating extraterrestrial origin leading to an attitude of concealment of this information. It would not be a novelty given the history of this country in covering up the UFO phenomenon in past decades.[29]

### **3.6. Argument 6: Global UFO wave history is associated with dramatic moments in humanity.**

Several scholars have suggested the presence and influence of extraterrestrial intelligences in the development of society since the origin of the human species.[41,42]

The LAASU 2019 Manifesto clarifies that: "...there is evidence of the presence of these Extraterrestrial Intelligences in humanity's past, and they may have influenced our origins, history, religion, cultures, and scientific and technological development"[25]. In the opinion of Dr. Acosta-Navarro, there has been a subtle presence of UFOs in dramatic moments of humanity since antiquity, as well as great wars in the past, after the development of atomic energy, and at the beginning of the space age.[43]

Subsequently, at the "Forum on the War in Ukraine and the Risk of Nuclear Hecatombs", organized by LAASU in March 2022 (Figure 5), another Manifest was published on the war in Ukraine supporting several points regarding the manifest presence of Extraterrestrial Intelligences in situations of armed conflict.[44] Some of the nine affirmative points:

*"Disclose that the UFO casuistry suggests that Extraterrestrial Intelligences, which visit the Earth, are of different origins and levels of technological/scientific advancement and have strong concern regarding a nuclear conflict. Concern that is perceived, after the mastery of atomic energy by humanity, with the intensification of contacts.*

*Based on information received in Close Encounters of the Fifth Kind from authentic "contactees", which suggest the presence of Extraterrestrial Intelligences in the contemporary of society, consider the strong possibility of their indirect influence on the outcome of the Ukraine/Russia conflict.*

*Although the serious UFO casuistry suggests that Extraterrestrial Intelligences have sufficient technological capacity to block or neutralize our nuclear weapons, argue that the hypothesis presented here is that Extraterrestrial Intelligences will not directly intervene in the final fate of an eventual nuclear war."*

Before the events of February, the global risk situation had reached its most dangerous levels with the course of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the resulting confrontation between Russia and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). It had reached its most dangerous levels with Vladimir Putin saying he felt entitled to use nuclear weapons against Ukraine. It is the closest we have come to a nuclear war since 1962, during the tension between Cuba and the United States. Add to this narrative a surprisingly unprepared Russian military facing Ukrainian defenders funded by the West.[45]

Days before and immediately after the downed UFO events, the crisis remained. At the UN General Assembly, António Guterres stated that a global nuclear conflict is even greater than in the Cold War period: "*In fact, the Doomsday Clock is a global alarm clock. We need to wake up and get to work*".[46]



**Figure 5** Poster announcing the international virtual meeting “Fórum: Guerra na Ucrânia e o risco de Apocalipse nuclear: Extraterrestres onde estão?” March, 2022, São Paulo, Brazil.

Relations between Russia and the United States, long strained, have worsened even further since Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year. In February, Moscow pulled out of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) nuclear arms reduction treaty with Washington. Both the United States and Russia - by far the world's largest nuclear powers - have said that a nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought, but the conflict in Ukraine has raised fears of a direct confrontation with the West.[47]

### 3.7. Argument 7: Worldwide recognition of the importance of the UFO phenomenon and possible contact with Extraterrestrial Intelligences by the United Nations

The United Nations (UN) had previously addressed the subject of the UFO phenomenon and possible contact with extraterrestrial intelligence. In 1978, academics and UFO researchers Jaques Vallee and Allen Hynek suggested a department dedicated to researching these phenomena to the UN. Despite the favorable GA/426 decision, nothing has been done.[48]

During the Cold War, US President Ronald Reagan, calling for a better understanding of the risk of nuclear war, would utter almost prophetic sentences at the UN General Assembly:

*“Can we and all nations not live in peace? In our obsession with antagonisms of the moment, we often forget how much unites all the members of humanity. Perhaps we need some outside, universal threat to make us recognize this common bond. I occasionally think how quickly our differences worldwide would vanish if we were facing an alien threat from outside this world. And yet, I ask you, is not an alien force already among us? What could be more alien to the universal aspirations of our peoples than war and the threat of war?...”*[49]

More recently, the subject of the possibility of extraterrestrial contact was considered at the UN during a press conference, when Mazlan Othman, Director of the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs, stated that the United Nations would have a mechanism to deal with any matters affecting humanity, including extraterrestrial life. However, she also stated that she did not know the protocols or what would be done in the face of something of this magnitude.[50]

Dr. Acosta-Navarro, in the LAASU 2019 Manifest, already cited in this article, also states the need for the UN to reset and reassess the importance of the UFO phenomenon:

*“Local, national and international authorities, such as the United Nations, the global scientific community and the media, must take immediate action in recognizing this reality and its significance to society, although we know that some governments are very likely to have a deep understanding of the reality of the issue”.*

### **3.8. Argument 8: The opinion of 'contactees' and ufologists days after incidents**

Since George Adamsky, the 1950s 'contactee' considered highly likely to be authentic in the Final Contact Project's assessment, several other authentic 'contactees' have reported that various Extraterrestrial Intelligences they have made contact with claim to be concerned about the danger of self-destruction resulting from a nuclear war.

In the Final Contact Project, a milestone study in the field, we hypothesized that authentic CE5thK could probably be happening. We designed and applied an original approach with qualitative and quantitative variables constituting a rule of 12 criteria for defining a high probability, low probability or inconclusive evidence in order to set the authenticity of 72 cases of alleged CE5thK. A high probability was considered as authentic. We found 25 cases to be a high probability of being an authentic phenomenon. Thus, we found evidence to support that advanced contact from ETI with human beings probably is happening on the Earth at present. To our knowledge, this was the first time such findings were reported. The results were counter to mainstream science and astronomy, challenging the paradigm of the impossibility that humankind has been contacted by ETI.[51] Additionally, in these authentic CE5thK cases, there was important and far-reaching information with amazing potential for our society in several fields of knowledge. Information received by authentic 'contactees' was related to origin, motivations of these ETI, and even specific technical information.

In addition, and more recently, the Epimetheus Project would confirm these results and expand the information in various fields of human knowledge. A total of 40% of authentic 'contactees' report that Extraterrestrial Intelligences from different origins have concerns related to the risk of self-destruction of humanity by the misuse of atomic energy. [12]. Uri Geller, another 'contactee' with a high probability of being authentic, stressed the importance and extreme caution of how the US government should treat the phenomenon.

*"There are reports of UFOs that the Pentagon released not long ago, footage filmed from the cockpit of US fighter jets" Geller said. "These UFOs are flying at such speed that there's no technology available to us that could analyze this phenomenon. The Pentagon doesn't know what they are." "But we, those who believe in extraterrestrial life, believe that UFOs are visiting our planet for a reason. There's a plan here." [52]*

Sixto Paz, famous 'contactee' and ufologist, [53] considered authentic in the Final Contact Project, stated that in his interpretation and analysis - but not as information passed on to him - that was unlikely that extraterrestrial craft could be shot down because of their advanced technology. However, Sixto accepted that several aspects are interesting, such as the reaction of the US government. He agreed that the interpretation of the phenomenon as a whole leaves much to think about.[54]

### **3.9. Argument 9: Events following the February incidents reinforcing the hypothesis of extraterrestrial influence**

Days after the February events, a paper by scientists Loeb & Kirkpatrick supports the hypothesis that an extraterrestrial spacecraft is in the solar system, seeding probes during its passage by Earth. The hypothesis was raised from the orbital parameters of Oumuamua and other objects like IM2. According to the scientists, the probes would not have been picked up by telescopes due to low starlight reflection. In addition, the researchers hypothesize that such objects can be fueled by sunlight or water.[55]

Unexplained UFO sightings continued in the United States after the incident and may be part of the same UFO wave. On February 14, from north of Philadelphia, a sighting of four objects was reported, accompanied by an aircraft that resembled a military helicopter.[56] On February 28, news reports from Russia reported the air closure of St. Petersburg after UFOs were detected, with jets sent to intercept them.[57]

If there were suspicions of a cover-up, March 28 reinforced this hypothesis since the Pentagon declared that the UFO rescue would be classified information.[58]

On the other hand, the world geopolitical situation with the risk of a nuclear hecatomb and self-destruction remains due to the war in Ukraine, with Russia withdrawing from the anti-nuclear missile treaty with the United States.[59] Days before the closing of this article, more news confirms the gloomy world geopolitical outlook. Recently, on May 19, at the G-7 meeting, after Biden, US president, announced new military aid to Ukraine of 375 million dollars to Ukraine, Lula criticized the US positioning on the war between Russia and Ukraine: "*Biden does not talk about peace*".[60]

What will the news be tomorrow? How much longer will we have as humanity?

**3.10. Argument 10: Global meaning of the charade or puzzle whose message tends to homogenize or unify us in questioning or understanding the phenomenon.**

Here, we can cite Ronald Reagan's almost prophetic phrases at the UN to illustrate this point. The phenomena that occurred represented something unknown, a common problem for the world, which tends to homogenize or unify us for the questioning or understanding of the phenomenon.

The four UFOs shot down could be low-tech extraterrestrial machines, described in some cases as flying at 32 and 64 km/h, posing no danger.[61]. Unlike the incidents with aircraft carrier jets presenting flight capabilities that, as far as is known, no terrestrial ship could have.



**Figure 6** Image representing the central hypotheses of this study

On the other hand, although in all cases the US government triggered the typical protocol of identification, pursuit, and shooting down, the UFOs were not described as identical, being described as cylindrical, octagonal, small as a car, and even the case of the Montana UFO detected on radar but not found, ghost-like.

Another point to be considered is that the phenomenon could lead to different perceptions of the pilots of the war jets. CNN reported an anonymous source with knowledge of the directions said the pilots shared conflicting observations about the object, including whether it had interfered with their systems, and said that they could not explain how it stayed in the air.[62]

UFOs of geometric, round, cylindrical, octagonal, and perhaps "hide-and-seek" ghost shapes were observed throughout the period. Could all this represent a child's game for humankind: a form of communication or a charade? Are any warnings to be interpreted? Can we imagine that Extraterrestrial Intelligences may be treating us as we treat our children with toys such as the geometric "shape-passing" game to improve our intellectual capacity and understanding? (Figure 6). The sequence of facts witnessed worldwide via the mainstream media and networks on February 10-12, 2023, gave a clear picture of the faces of the highest government officials of the most economically, politically, and militarily powerful parents expressing surprise, confusion, and inability to understand or explain what was happening at those times.

Is it possible that we are living the times of the Noah again?: *“Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; people and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.”*[63]

Classically there are two main explanatory hypotheses of extraterrestrial contact phenomena, the “Zoo hypothesis” and the “Interdimensional hypothesis”. The “Zoo hypothesis”[64] speculates on the assumed behavior and existence of technologically advanced extraterrestrial life and the possible reasons they refrain from contacting Earth. It is one of many theoretical explanations for the Fermi paradox. The hypothesis states that alien life intentionally avoids communication with Earth to allow for natural evolution and sociocultural development, and avoiding interplanetary contamination, similar to people observing animals at a zoo. The hypothesis seeks to explain the apparent absence of extraterrestrial life despite its generally accepted plausibility and hence the reasonable expectation of its existence.[65] A variant on the zoo hypothesis suggested by scientist John Ball is the “laboratory” hypothesis, where humanity is being subjected to experiments, with Earth being a giant laboratory. We could speculate that if the “Zoo Hypothesis” were correct the ETI could be testing our reactions and behaviors in the face of the phenomenon.

Another theory is the “Interdimensional Hypothesis” (IDH) proposed by several scientists, such as John Keel [66] and Jacques Valle.[67] It states that UFOs and related events involve visitations from other “realities” or “dimensions” that coexist separately alongside our own. It is not necessarily an alternative to the extraterrestrial hypothesis, since the two hypotheses are not mutually exclusive. Both could be true simultaneously. The IDH also holds that UFOs are a modern manifestation of a phenomenon that has occurred throughout recorded human history, which in prior ages were ascribed to mythological or supernatural creatures. This hypothesis has the advantage is its ability to explain the apparent ability of UFOs to appear and disappear from sight and radar; this is explained as the UFO entering and leaving our dimension (“materializing” and “dematerializing”).[68]

A few years ago, Dr. Acosta-Navarro presented a third hypothesis, the “Homeric Stage Hypothesis”[69] where the relation of Extraterrestrial Intelligences with human beings even in modern times would hold similar characteristics as described by Homer in his classical “Iliad” and “Odyssey”. They would act as gods or semi-gods with many behavioral features of human nature and strong presence in the society. What happened in February could be a fast, complex and total action from the extraterrestrial gods sending a message for the humankind decrypt it? ...was it a real “Operation Ray of Zeus”? (Figure 7).

Even, all these hypotheses are not necessarily excluding and they could be complementary.



**Figure 7** Dr. Acosta-Navarro and his wife Dr. Silvia Prado visiting the archeological remains of Oracle of Delphi (Greece), August 2022.

Dr. Acosta Navarro had already stated in the last affirmative point of the 2019 Manifest, the complex nature of the phenomenon of extraterrestrial contact. Just over three years later, this statement would seem even more accurate, and in a way, could be considered prophetic.

*7. The intrinsic nature of these Extraterrestrial Intelligences, as well as the reasons for their presence and interaction with humans, represents a complexity beyond the limit of our understanding and rationality that constitute the greatest challenge for the next generations.*

In the case that the hypothesis proposed here is correct, we should hope that extraterrestrial intelligence do not feel attacked by the shooting down of unmanned objects, or worse, a hostile and bellicose attitude, even while officially recognizing that they did not represent a direct threat to the population. If we sent exploratory craft to another planet and they were attacked or shot down, that would have a meaning for us and a response. We should consider the apparent ability to neutralize the nuclear weapons arsenal reported in various situations. One of most commented on happened in Malstrom Air Force Base, in Montana in February 1967.[43]

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#### 4. Conclusion

This study supports the hypothesis that the downed UFOs in February 2023 would be a consequence of direct or indirect action with a global reach of Extraterrestrial Intelligences, which can be interpreted as a charade or puzzle, intending to raise awareness and reflection about the critical moment of risk of self-destruction, highlighting our technological limitations and showing our vulnerability. It remains to be seen whether we will have time and be able to change fate before an imminent nuclear apocalypse.

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#### Compliance with ethical standards

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All the authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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