



U.S. Air Force Jet Shoots Down Ham's Mylar Balloon

The amateur radio community continues to be abuzz about three recent shootdowns of unidentified flying objects in North American air-space: one over Alaska, one over the

Yukon in northwestern Canada and another above Lake Huron.

It turns out that the object [blasted out of the sky over the Yukon](#) on Feb. 11 by a U.S. Air Force jet might have been an amateur radio "pico balloon" — specifically, one called K9YO-15, which launched from Independence Grove Forest Preserve in Libertyville, Illinois, north of Chicago.

K9YO-15 was apparently on its seventh circumnavigation of the globe after being aloft for 123 days. In a communication with an NIBBB team member, Willis said that "we should be very proud of the work that we have done, and hope to continue our project connecting with amateur radio stations around the world."

Space Insider "Pico balloons are safe"

According to Cary Willis of the Northern Illinois Bottlecap Balloon Brigade (NIBBB), "Our balloons are very small, 32-inch [81 centimeters] diameter, 100-inch [254 cm] circumference, pre-stretched and carry a payload of around 10 grams [0.35 ounces] including the tracker, solar panel and 33-foot [10 meters] antenna wire," Willis told Inside Outer Space. The K9YO-15 balloon made use of a silver mylar 32-inch sphere, which is available for the low price of \$13.33.

"Our pico balloon K9YO had been flying for 123 days preparing for the seventh time around the world when it went missing over Canada," Willis said. "That wasn't the first time K9YO went missing. After the fifth time around the world in 77 days, K9YO went missing for 30 days, reported on the 106th day over Mongolia and continued the sixth circumnavigation at 112 days."

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Since pico balloon K9YO-15 has not been heard from for several days, amateurs are calling it "missing in action." The object was last reported on Feb. 11 near Hagemester Island in Alaska.

According to the Pentagon, the object shot down over Canada that day was a "small metallic balloon with a tethered payload" — seemingly a match for a pico balloon.

"Pico balloons don't spy on anyone, and they're perfectly safe to be in the sky with aircraft. The FAA [U.S. Federal Aviation Administration] has guidelines about what can/can't fly, and pico balloons are well inside the safety threshold, so they don't pose a danger to aircraft, nor to people on the ground," Malnati said. The objects are very lightweight, so they don't pose a danger to people and infrastructure on the ground even if they pop and fall, he added. *Leonard David. A longtime writer for Space.com,*



FAKE RICE

Made from a combination of potatoes, sweet potatoes, and [synthetic resins](#) (plastic), this variety of "rice" costs very little to produce.

The synthetic grains are formed to look like real rice and sprayed with an artificial fragrance to make them more appealing. The plastic rice doesn't cook, instead remaining hard after cooking. To hide this fact from consumers, distributors of rice grown in the Wuchang province mix it with the real stuff.

It's estimated that 800,000 tons of rice are grown in the paddies of Wuchang, yet annual sales of Wuchang "rice" has been at 10 million tons. That's a lotta plastic ([1](#)).

Electromagnetic pulse expert warns EMP is biggest danger to America

by [Misty Severi, Breaking News Reporter](#),

Washington Examiner

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One of the nation's leading experts on [electromagnetic pulses](#) warned that an EMP blast is the biggest danger to the [United States](#) because it could disable the entire [electrical grid](#).

Renowned author and military historian William Forstchen told the *Washington Examiner* in a recent interview that the blast from an EMP would devastate the U.S. because America's electrical infrastructure is outdated and ill-equipped to handle the sudden loss of electricity caused by the blast.

[DRY RUN: BALLOONS CALLED TOP 'DELIVERY PLATFORM' FOR NUCLEAR EMP ATTACK](#)

"We're very vulnerable to this type of attack," Forstchen warned. "Increased tensions with China is a very worrisome thing. It would not necessarily be China that would do it, but if three of these were delivered over the United States by ballistic missile and detonated 200 miles above the Earth's atmosphere, they would short out our entire power grid and take us offline. According to congressional studies, upwards of 90% of all Americans would perish within a year. It is a very real and serious threat. Our entire infrastructure is antiquated. We must modernize it."

An EMP, caused by the detonation of a [nuclear weapon](#), would cause chaos in the country because of the pivotal role that electricity plays in everyday life, Forstchen said.

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"Once we lose that basic fundamental building block of our society, electricity, where do you get your water?" Forstchen asked. "Where do you get your medication? Where do you get your food? How do you refill your car? How do you control populations that might turn to crime? We're just not prepared." Forstchen, who has written [multiple books](#) on EMPs, urged people to pressure lawmakers and officials to update the U.S.'s infrastructure. People should also stock up on approximately two months of emergency supplies, including food and water, he said.

Although the technology for an EMP has been around for decades, Forstchen claimed it only takes

one detonation of a nuclear weapon to give U.S. enemies with nuclear capabilities the ability to attack the country. The only real way to avoid such an attack would be to update the U.S.'s infrastructure and warn enemies that the destruction of America would cause irreparable damage on a global level, according to Forstchen.

"We need to say to opponents like China, out in the open, if you're thinking of EMP, don't do it because you'll suffer as well," Forstchen said.

[Tensions with China](#) have increased recently after [Chinese spy balloons](#) were discovered in U.S. airspace in early [February](#).

China claimed the balloon was a weather balloon and not a danger to the U.S., but defense officials said they believe the balloon is a form of Chinese spy craft. Although Forstchen said he does not believe the balloons are a risk by themselves, other security experts have warned that countries could smuggle a small nuclear bomb on one of the balloons.

"Using a balloon as a WMD/WME platform could provide adversaries with a pallet of altitudes and payload options with which to maximize offensive effects against the U.S.," Air Force Maj. David Stuckenberg said in a [2015 defense report](#).

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"A high altitude balloon could be designed, created, and launched in a matter of months. There is nothing to prevent several hundred pounds of weapons material from being delivered to altitude," Stuckenberg said.

Forstchen concluded that Congress has come close to passing EMP-related legislation, but the legislation eventually dies in a committee. Forstchen urged the [Biden administration](#) not to let that happen again.

