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I am Oscar Santa Maria Huertas, official pilot of the Peruvian Air Force, currently retired.

On April 11, 1980, at 7:15 in the morning, 1800 men were in formation at the Air Base of La Joya, Arequipa. They all observed a stationary object in the sky which looked like a balloon, at about three miles distance, and approximately 1,800 feet altitude. It was luminous because it reflected the sun.

My unit commander ordered me to takeoff in my Sukoi -22 jet to shoot down the spherical object. It was in restricted airspace, without clearance, and we were concerned about espionage. I approached the object and strafed sixty-four 30mm shells at it. Some projectiles went towards the ground, and others hit the object fully, but they had no effect at all. The projectiles didn't bounce off; probably they were absorbed. The cone-shaped wall of fire that I sent out would normally obliterate anything in its path.

The object then began to ascend, and move farther away from the base. When I was at about 36,000 ft., it made a sudden stop, forcing me to veer to the side since I was only 1500 feet away. I flew up higher to attack it from above, but just as I had locked on to the target and was ready to shoot, the object made a straight vertical climb evading the attack. Two more times I had the object on target, when the object was stationary. Each time, it moved away at the very last minute, when I was just about to fire, always eluding my attack.

I decided to climb at full thrust to get above the object, but it began to ascend almost parallel to my plane, and when I reached 63,000 ft., it stopped. At this point, I came to within about 300 feet of the UFO. It was about 30 feet in diameter. It was an enameled, cream-colored dome, with a wide, circular, metallic base. It had no engines, no exhausts, no windows, no wings or antennae. It lacked all the typical aircraft components, with no visible propulsion system. It was at that moment that I realized this it was not a spying device, but that it was a UFO, something totally unknown. I was almost out of fuel, so I couldn't attack or maneuver my plane, or make a high speed escape. I was afraid. I thought I might be finished. When I had calmed down, I radioed for another plane to come and have a look, trying to hide my fear. They said no, it's too high, just come back. I had to glide part way down due to lack of fuel, zigzagging to make my plane harder to hit, always with my eyes on the rearview mirrors hoping it wouldn't chase me. It didn't.

I had spent 22 minutes maneuvering with this object. After I landed, the object remained stationary in the sky for two hours, for everyone at the base to see.

A US Department of Defense document titled UFO Sighted in Peru described the incident, stating that the vehicle's origin remains unknown.

It still gives me chills to think about it.

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