1. On 17 Jun 66, at 2147 hours, local time, en route to Tehran, Iran, on an international flight, I observed a strange phenomenon on the horizon. As we were approaching the Rudeshar beacon, located approximately 25 miles NNE of Mehrabad Airport, Tehran, we suddenly observed a brilliant white sphere approximating the coloration and intensity of full bright moon. The sphere appeared suddenly and at the first sighting was approximately three times the size of a full moon. At the moment, we were flying at approximately 10,000 feet on a course of 270 degrees and a speed of about 500 knots. The sighting occurred just as we prepared to fly a circular pattern over the Rudeshar beacon prior to descending to a lower altitude and heading toward Mehrabad Airport. We observed the sighting throughout the time we circled the Rudeshar beacon, a time we later calculated to be of four to five minutes duration. I would estimate the position of the sphere to be on a heading of 010 degrees and deep within the Soviet Union, perhaps north of 65 degrees latitude. During the four to five minutes that I observed the sphere, it continued to grow in size as its intensity diminished. Toward the end of this period it became very faint and its enormous size seemed to fill the sky. The base of the sphere appeared to rest on the horizon throughout the period it was observed, indicating that the center of the sphere was rising during the time that it was expanding. The weather conditions were excellent and the unusually clear sky afforded unlimited visibility.

2. Another airliner at a slightly lower altitude also observed the phenomenon and we exchanged reports about it. On landing at Mehrabad Airport, some 20 minutes later, we discovered that the phenomenon was not seen from the ground. About 30 minutes during the very last stages. At that point, since the intensity had markedly diminished, it would go unnoticed unless...
unless one were alerted to look for it. The reason for its being obscured from the ground is attributed to the abrupt rise of the very high mountain range north of the city in the direction of the phenomenon.

3. I don't know what caused this strange occurrence which we observed. I had never seen anything resembling it in over 30 years of flying experience. One theory advanced to me was that the sphere was a "false moon" and that such a phenomenon has been seen near Rome, Italy. My feeling is that the sphere was formed by gasses emanating perhaps from a near-earth explosion. These gasses forming the sphere may have been illuminated by the sun from the back side. If this were the case, it would account for the diminishing intensity as the density of the gasses decreased with the expansion of the sphere.