

## Flying Saucer Fever Grips Iran, Theories Abound

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By Christian Oliver

TEHRAN (Reuters) - Is Iran about to be invaded by little green men or are the Americans racing through the night sky in spaceships to spy on their arch-foe the Islamic Republic?

Flying saucer fever has gripped Iran after dozens of sightings in the last few days. Fanciful cartoons of alien spacecraft have adorned the front pages.

State television on Wednesday showed a sparkling white disc it said was filmed over Tehran on Tuesday night.

More colorful Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) have been spotted beaming out green, red, blue and purple rays over the northern cities of Tabriz and Ardebil and in the Caspian Sea province of Golestan, the official IRNA news agency reported.

Newspapers and agencies reported people rushing out into the streets in eight towns on Tuesday night to watch a bright extraterrestrial light dipping in and out of the clouds.

An airforce officer in the Revolutionary Guards was quoted in the reformist Vagha-ye Etefaghiyeh daily saying Iran's Supreme National Security Council should investigate whether these visitors from afar had hostile intent.

But Sa'dollah Nasiri-Qeydari, head of the Astronomical Society of Iran, told Reuters the stories were unfounded.

"In my opinion, flying saucers do not exist," he said, insisting his telescopes would have picked up invaders from outer space.

"The people who have seen these things are not experts - farmers, villagers and pilots," he added.

He said what people reported was consistent with the planet Venus, whose intense light in its current position would be given different hues by being filtered through the atmosphere.

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