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Incident of Security Concern Report

Incident #	Description:	
PX23-173	(U) Low Flying Aircraft	
Date of Discovery:	Division:	Department:
September 27, 2023		
Employee Name:	Employee Badge #:	Area:
		PPA
Supervisor Name:	Supervisor Badge #:	

Significance/Category:	Inquiry Official(s):	
Non	(b)(6), (b)(7)(C)	
Pantex IOSC Program Lead	Signature:	Date:
(b)(6), (b)(7)(C)		
Non-Reportable Incident: ☒	Occurrence: ☐	Infraction: ☐

I. NARRATIVE

On September 22nd 2023, at approximately 1038 hours, Pantex employees (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) and (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) were working just north of the Kilgore facility on the South-West side of Pantex property when they witnessed a "glossy black" helicopter fly over them at approximately 500-600 feet above the ground.

The helicopter was said to have initially came from the northwest from Highway 60, and crossed the Pantex property boundary. After crossing the boundary line, the helicopter flew over the Kilgore facility on the South-West side of Pantex property before exiting to the west, heading back across Highway 60.

As the helicopter began flying south toward I-40, it turned around and began moving back toward Pantex property. As it crossed the property boundary a second time; it began moving east toward Playa-lake 5 directly east of the Kilgore facility.

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May be exempt from public release under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552)	
Exemption Number and Category: <u>Category 7 - Law Enforcement</u> Department of Energy	
review required before public release.	
Name/Org. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)	PX-4348 Date: 10/11/2023 Guidance: CG-SS-

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In an attempt to find designation numbers or other identifying markings (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) retrieved a pair of binoculars and continued to watch the helicopter throughout the remainder of the incident while speaking to Protective Force Central Alarm Station (CAS) (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) on the phone.

(b)(7)(E), (b)(7)(F)

again

found no indication of activity in the area.

Due to not finding any current flights or alarm activity on or near Pantex property, (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) began asking (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) questions to help triangulate a specific location. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) reported the helicopter had lowered in altitude over Playa-lake 5, began to slow and was hovering in place (estimated thirty-seconds). After hovering, the helicopter began to move south again along the shoreline of Playa-lake 5. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) added that the helicopter was now extremely low to the ground, but after approximately sixty-seconds quickly gained altitude and again flew over the Kilgore facility before turning south and departing the area near Highway 60.

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(b)(6), (b)(7)(C) later added that as the helicopter lowered, he believed it had landed just south of the shoreline; (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) did not initially report this to (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) as he believed it was only flying close to the ground, but did not land. The helicopter was last seen by (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) moving South, away from Pantex, continuing toward I-40 until visual contact was lost.

Based on time of first report to the end of call with CAS, the incident lasted for approximately four minutes, and the helicopters' location was believed to have come no more than approximately 3 miles from the main site. Due to the circumstances, timeframe and past experiences with similar reported but unconfirmed aircraft in the area, (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) made the decision to not call for a (b)(7)(E), (b)(7)(F) to Protective Force personnel. The Federal Aviation Administration was later notified, and confirmed (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) initial assessment of not being able to confirm aircraft crossing over Pantex property during this timeframe. Due to these circumstances, this occurrence will be categorized as a non-incident.

II. STATEMENTS

(b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

"On 9-22-2023 at @ 1030 (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) and I were servicing the lock on TTN9. At 1038 a shiny black helicopter which I believe to hold at least 4 people and appeared to have 2 occupants flew over us extremely low. It came from the northwest and flew down to the big playa just to the east of us on plant property hovering just above the water. At 1039 I placed a call to our CAS supervisor's # at (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) and (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) answered the phone. I ask him if anyone was authorized to be flying over plant property, he stated no to me. I then explained to him what was occurring and he stated that he could not see anything from his location. The helicopter hovered over the water a few minutes then proceeded southwest towards Kilgore flying over Kilgore area real slow. It then paralleled FM683 then county road A heading south and continued that direction all the way to I40 where I lost sight of it. The entire time I was tracking the helicopter, I was doing my best to observe it through a pair of binoculars I had while talking to (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) on the phone and I never observed any FAA #s or markings on it anywhere."

(b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

(b)(6), (b)(7)(C) and myself, (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) were servicing gate pads locks in the PPA on Friday morning 09/22/2023. We were servicing the metal gate TTN-9 north of the Texas Tech Farm house, hearing a helicopter flying from the northwest to the southeast. As the helicopter came into view the color was solid gloss black with dark tinted windows with no identifying lettering, numbering, or markings. The helicopter was flying lower than would be expected anywhere much less over this specific property. The time was 10:39am, the helicopter continued southeast to just north of the railroad tracks north of HWY 60 where it circled around the playa lake #5 hovering over the playa lake #5 then moving slowly south over the grassland and touched down, setting there for approximately one-minute.

As this was happening (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) was on his phone to CAS reporting in real time all he and myself were witnessing. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) was also using binoculars trying to see identifying markings on the helicopter. The helicopter lifted off the grass, flew west, circled back around to the east across Kilgore property, made a U-Turn back west then turned south-bound along county road A until it was out of site. We didn't see the helicopter again."

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(b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

"On 09/22/2023 at approximately 1039 I received a call from (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) asking me about helicopter activity near Kilgore area. I stated not to my knowledge. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) stated that there is a helicopter flying over the "playa lake near (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) house and the he's damn near on the ground. I then immediately placed (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) on speaker and (b)(7)(E), (b)(7)(F) (b)(6), (b)(7) then stated he's taking off now. I'm looking at (b)(7)(E), (b)(7)(F) to reference any flights near Kilgore and (b)(7)(E), (b)(7)(F). I stated to (b)(6), (b)(7) that there is no aircraft in flight on (b)(7)(E), (b)(7)(F) (b)(6), (b)(7) stated that he's nearly on the ground near the Playa, then (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) stated he's near the Kilgore hovering. I asked (b)(6), (b)(7) if it was a LifeStar. (b)(6), (b)(7) stated it was black, then stated he has some Bino's to get a better look, then sat his phone down to locate the aircraft. (b)(6), (b)(7) then told me he's hovering above Kilgore, but stated he can't read shit with these Bino's and that he's to far over there. I'm still referencing my (b)(7)(E), (b)(7)(F) (b)(6), (b)(7) stated its solid black or dark green. With lots of wind noise (b)(6), (b)(7) stated he cannot see any markings on the aircraft. I asked (b)(6), (b)(7) where he's at and he stated he's heading in a direction back towards the plant. (b)(6), (b)(7) stated surely the FAA knows who this is. I asked (b)(6), (b)(7) if the aircraft is still on the South-West side, he stated "yes". (b)(6), (b)(7) again stated it was solid black or dark green but could not see any markings with his bad Bino's. I asked him if the aircraft was still south of HWY 60 and (b)(6), (b)(7) stated he is not South of HWY 60 getting close to I-40 heading due south now. (b)(6), (b)(7) stated he will keep and eye out for it. (b)(6), (b)(7) stated he was looking like he was hunting coyotes in the Playa. (b)(7)(E), (b)(7)(F) He again stated he would keep an eye out for it, if it returns.

The Information given about the aircraft was from (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) cell phone based from his location near (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) house looking South towards Kilgore with according to (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) "a bad set of BINO's". I immediately placed (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) on (b)(7)(E), (b)(7)(F)

(b)(7)(E), (b)(7)(F)

(b)(6), (b)(7)(C) have used the (b)(7)(F) for several incidents in the past. I remained on the landline with (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) monitoring the (b)(7)(E) until the final departure of the aircraft. (b)(7)(E), (b)(7)(F) based on the fact that the aircraft never headed in a direction toward our assets. In the past I have had calls from personnel stating they see a drone over PANTEX and immediately went into a 10-17 and in fact after using our CCTV'S it was ospreys. According to (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) the aircraft went due South across HWY 60 on two different occasions, with the final departure heading to I-40. There also has been numerous times in my 15 years as a CAS supervisor where we have had calls from personnel about low flying aircraft directly over PANTEX and again immediately went into a (b)(7)(E) until final departure. This incident where the aircraft was possibly on the far southwest side of the plant not far from Amarillo airport and not heading in a direction towards our assets and that the aircraft was possibly on and off the plant several times (b)(7)(E), (b)(7)(F) I did not inform the Shift Commander because

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the incident was quickly resolved when the aircraft departed and never returned. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) never reported that the aircraft landed or that there was personnel fast roping, which would have been a serious indicator to security. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) only reported that it was flying, slowing down and possibly hovering somewhere near Kilgore and HWY 60.”