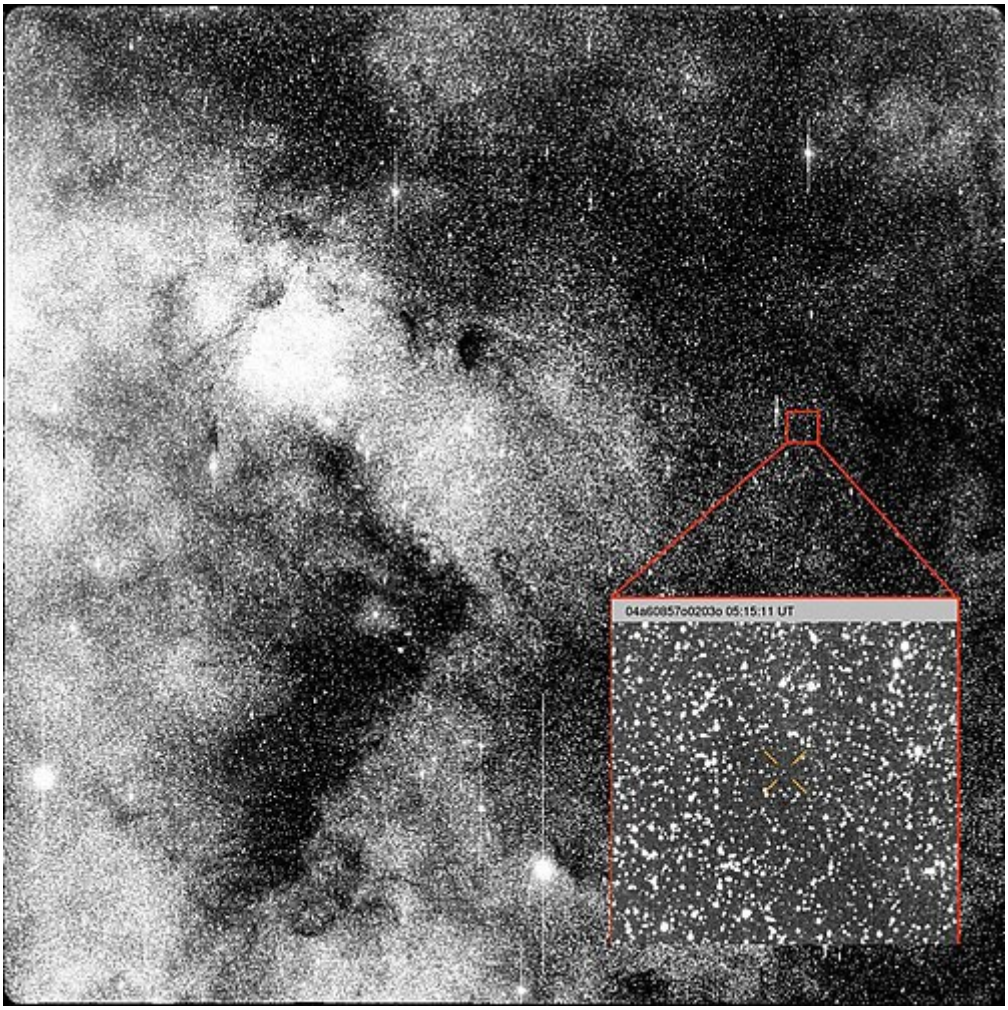
Interstellar Object 3I/ATLAS Sparks Debate: Comet or Alien Technology?



The interstellar object known as **3I/ATLAS** is still several months away from its closest approach to Earth in **November 2025** , but it has already become the center of a growing debate. While most astronomers consider it a typical interstellar comet, a minority — including Harvard astrophysicist **Avi Loeb** — believe it could be something far more extraordinary: **alien technology in disguise**, and possibly even **hostile**.

In a **non-peer-reviewed paper**, Loeb and two collaborators argue that 3I/ATLAS's **unusual trajectory** suggests it might not be natural at all. They propose it could be an extraterrestrial spacecraft, or at least an object with artificial origins.

However, this hypothesis is strongly **disputed by mainstream experts**. One of them, **Samantha Lawler**, an astronomer at the University of Regina in Canada who specializes in solar system dynamics, remains skeptical. “All evidence points to this being an ordinary comet that was ejected from another solar system, just as countless billions of comets have been ejected from our own,” she says.

But Loeb isn’t stopping there. Another **non-peer-reviewed study** he supports outlines an ambitious plan: **redirecting NASA’s Juno spacecraft**, currently orbiting Jupiter, to intercept 3I/ATLAS. According to the proposal, applying a **velocity change of 2.675 km/s** to Juno on **September 14, 2025** would allow it to rendezvous with the interstellar object.

Juno, which was designed to study Jupiter, carries a suite of sophisticated instruments — including a **near-infrared**

spectrometer, **magnetometer**, **microwave radiometer**, **UV spectrograph**, and a **visible light camera** — that could, in theory, **analyze 3I/ATLAS up close** and perhaps settle the debate once and for all.

But redirecting Juno would be no small feat. Such a maneuver would come with significant **technical and budgetary challenges**, not to mention the risk of compromising Juno's ongoing science mission at Jupiter. So far, **NASA has not commented** on any intention to pursue the plan.

As the debate continues, one question lingers: **If this really is a rare opportunity to examine an interstellar object up close — and maybe more — what are we waiting for?**
