

Leaves U.S.

SFChronicle
Associated Press

New York

A Russian exchange student who slashed his wrists and throat at Kennedy Airport last Sunday was allowed to leave the country early today after assuring United States officials that he was leaving of his own accord.

U.S. immigration officials had delayed the departure of the Soviet airliner for hours before they were allowed to interview the student in a first class lounge at the airport.

The student, Merab Kurashvily
See Back Page



AP Wirephoto

MERAB KURASHVILY
He waited at airport

From Page 1

shvily, 36, had waited quietly in a passenger terminal at the airport for hours while representatives of both sides discussed the matter. He had been scheduled to leave on a Soviet Aeroflot plane for Moscow.

BANDAGES

Kurashvily wore bandages at his throat and wrists. The apparent suicide attempt came while he was flying to Kennedy Airport from California where he had been involved in a food shoplifting incident in Berkeley.

The delay last night came after Richard Coombs, a Russian-speaking member of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, and U.S. immigration officials met the Russian party and insisted they be allowed to interview Kurashvily.

Although Kurashvily has been quoted by airport police as saying after the suicide attempt that he did not want political asylum in this country, the U.S. officials insisted they wished to hear it from him.

STUDENT

Earlier, in Washington, the Russians accused the U.S. of harassing the student, and U.S. officials denied this.

When the Russians arrived at the Pan American terminal used by Aeroflot, an immigration officer, Edward Farley, asked permission to interview Kurashvily in an immigration office in another building.

A Soviet official was heard to say "If you want to have an official interview, you can have it here."

The group then moved to a lounge one flight up. Kurashvily puffing on a cigarette and turning away when newsmen attempted to question him.

"He doesn't want to say anything," one of his escorts said.

At one point in the long discussion, a Soviet official said the student had gone to sleep.

GUARD

A heavy guard of airport police surrounded entrances to the lounge.

Kurashvily and another Soviet exchange student were involved in a food shoplifting incident in Berkeley, Calif., last week. After meeting with police and university officials in Berkeley, Soviet officials took him to New York's Kennedy Airport to board an Aeroflot airliner headed for Moscow.

But when airport personnel spotted Kurashvily bleeding from slashes on the wrists and throat, he was rushed to a hospital. Police reported Kurashvily said he had slashed himself, but was not seeking asylum and wished to return to the Soviet Union.

INTERVIEW

U.S. officials then set up an interview for Kurashvily for Tuesday to make sure he was heading back to the Soviet Union of his own accord. Meanwhile, Washington issued stop - orders at departure points to make sure he would not leave the U.S. surreptitiously.

State Department officials said the Soviets did not produce Kurashvily for the scheduled Tuesday hearing on grounds he was still too ill.