

2 U.S. Generals in Soviet After Their Plane Strays

by Bernard Gwertzman
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Moscow, Oct. 22 - The Soviet Union announced tonight that a United States Air Force plane, missing on a flight over Turkey with two American generals aboard, had violated Soviet airspace and landed in Soviet Armenia near the Turkish border.

A statement issued by Tass, the Soviet press agency, said the small plane was in good condition and the four men aboard - three Americans and a Turk - were in good health.

Tass said the aircraft landed yesterday at a field near the border town of Leninakan. Known until 1924 as Aleksandropol, it is a textile center with a population of about 140,000 some 55 miles northwest of the Armenian capital of Erivan.

No details were disclosed and the wording of the Tass statement was noncommittal as to the course of action the authorities might take.

[In Washington a State Department spokesman said Moscow had been asked to permit "consular access" to the two generals and their pilot, a major. The term is usually employed when officials are seeking to visit Americans in jail.]

According to some ^{Western} diplomats in Moscow, the lack of invective in the Soviet statement

diplomats in Moscow, the lack of invective in the Soviet statement seemed to indicate that Moscow would not make a major issue of the trespass by the six-passenger craft, which the Turkish authorities have said was on a routine flight from Erzurum in eastern Turkey to Kars, some 50 miles from the Soviet border.

Tass said "the competent Soviet authorities have been instructed to investigate the circumstances connected with the above-mentioned violation of the Soviet Union's frontier by the plane of the U.S. Air Force."

The Turkish announcement had the listed men aboard as Maj. Gen. Edward C. D. Scherrer, 57 years old, head of the United States military mission in Turkey, Brig. Gen. Claude M. McQuarrie Jr. 45,

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head of the Army section of the mission, and Major James Russell of the Air Force. Tass identified the Turkish officer as a colonel named Deneli.

The incident came a week after a Soviet airliner with 46 passengers aboard, was hijacked to the Turkish border town of Trebizond by a Lithuanian and his son. A Soviet stewardess was killed and the chief pilot and the navigator were wounded.

No Decision by Turkey

The Soviet Government has asked the Turkish authorities to extradite the men, Pranas Brzinskas-Korievo and his son Algirdas, but the Turkish Government has announced no decision.

There was some speculation that the Russians might hold the military men until the hijackers were turned over even though the cases were unrelated. Others maintained that Moscow might release them promptly to show good faith, putting "moral pressure" on the Turks to reciprocate.

When the United States Embassy was informed of the plane's whereabouts the charge d'affaires, Boris H. Klosson, asked for consular access. There was no immediate Soviet response.

In July, 1960, an RB-47, an American reconnaissance plane, was shot down by Soviet aircraft. The two survivors were released by Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev in January, 1961, as a sign of goodwill to the new American President, John F. Kennedy.

The most publicized violation of Soviet airspace was the U-2 affair, in which Francis Gary Powers was shot down in his high-flying reconnaissance plane in May, 1960. He was released in exchange for the Soviet spy Col. Rudolf Abel in 1962.

U.S. Applies for Access

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 21 — A State Department spokesman said today that the United States had asked for "consular access" to the three American officers.

A press officer, John King, said he did not know whether the Americans and the accompanying Turkish officer were



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Plane bound from Erzurum (1) to Kars (2) landed at Soviet town Leninakan (3).

being held prisoner. The term "consular access" usually indicates that officials are seeking to visit Americans in jail.

A Defense Department spokesman described as entirely likely a Turkish report that the plane reported lost in bad weather had been escorted to an airfield in Armenia by Soviet jets.

The Pentagon sources stressed that the men, with the Turkish colonel as liaison officer, were on a routine inspection of Turkish military installations.

The aircraft, a twin-engine Beechcraft, carried no reconnaissance equipment, the Pentagon officials said. It has a normal cruising speed of about 170 miles an hour.

The officials said they did not expect difficulties in obtaining the release of the plane and the Americans. There was some concern, however, that the Soviet Union might hold the Turkish officer as leverage in its effort to extradite the two Lithuanians who hijacked the Soviet airliner.

The mission headed by General Scherrer, who is from Shawneetown, Ill., advises the Turkish armed forces on use of equipment provided by the United States. General McQuarrie is from Fort Benning, Ga., and Major Russell from Piney Woods, Miss.

Pentagon biographies show that General Scherrer has not had an intelligence assignment since 1950 and that General McQuarrie has had none.



Associated Press

HELD IN SOVIET UNION: Brig. Gen. Claude M. McQuarrie Jr., left, and Maj. Gen. Edward C. D. Scherrer, passengers on plane that landed in Soviet area on flight meant to end in Turkey. Pilot of the plane and a Turk also were held.