

Soviet Protests Incursion By U.S. Plane as 'Hostile'

Links Air Space Violation to Military Activity Near Border—Americans Off to See Detained Generals

By JAMES F. CLARITY OCT 27 1970

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MOSCOW, Oct. 26—The Soviet Union protested to the United States and Turkey today over the incursion into Soviet airspace by an American Army plane that landed in Soviet Armenia last week.

The protests gave no indication whether the plane, a twin-engine Beechcraft carrying two American generals, an American military pilot and a Turkish officer, would be returned. Two American embassy officials flew today to the Armenian capital, Erivan, to meet with the detained Americans.

The Soviet protests indicated that Moscow did not consider the incursion accidental and de-

scribed it as a "hostile" act of the sort that could have grave consequences.

The statements, made public by Tass, the Soviet press agency, criticized the American military presence in Europe and the Middle East.

The protest to the United States hinted that the incident and the presence of American bases near the Soviet Union could seriously impede the improvement of relations between the two countries.

United States embassy officials said they had informed the Soviet authorities that the American plane strayed acci-

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dentally across the Soviet border on Wednesday after the pilot had lost his way on a tour of Turkish military installations. The plane landed in the Armenian town of Leninakan, near the Turkish border.

The American officers are Maj. Gen. Edward C. D. Scherrer, commander of the joint United States military aid mission to Turkey; his aide for ground forces, Brig. Gen. Claude M. McQuarrie Jr., and the pilot, Maj. James P. Russell Jr. The Turkish officer was identified as Col. Cavdad Deneli.

The tone of the protest to the United States was unusually harsh. Western diplomats said it could indicate that the Russians might maintain a hard bargaining line when they meet with American representatives in Helsinki next week to resume talks on limitations of strategic arms.

Moscow may also want to use the issue of the plane to counter American assertions in recent weeks that the Russians were possibly building a naval base at Cienfuegos, Cuba. The Soviet Union denied such involvement, but the language of the denial left open the possibility that it might be helping the Cubans build such an installation.

In addition, there was the possibility that the Soviet Union wanted to place pressure, however indirectly, on Turkey to extradite two hijackers of a Soviet plane.

Protest Is Quoted

The protest to the United States said the Americans had committed more than 10 violations of Soviet air space in the last three years.

"The United States Government should clearly realize," the protest said, "that such actions can only increase the possibility of very dangerous events fraught with most serious consequences.

"The Soviet Government has repeatedly drawn the attention of the United States Government to this activity which is openly hostile to the Soviet Union. The maintenance of American military bases around the Soviet Union is a most serious source of danger and does not accord in any way with statements in favor of an improvement of Soviet-American relations repeatedly made by United States leaders.

More than that, attention should also be drawn to the recent considerable increase in the activity of the United States Air Force and Navy in the area directly adjoining the southern borders of the Soviet Union.

"In the light of the above, there can be no doubt that violations of the Soviet Union's airspace by American planes take place by no means because of 'chance concurrence of circumstances' but are the result of the general military activity of the United States in areas adjoining the Soviet Union."

Scherrer Knows Secret Data

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ANKARA, Turkey, Oct. 26—A high Turkish defense source said today that General Scherrer, head of the United States military mission, had access to Turkish military secrets.

"Very little, if any, information of our defense set-up at our eastern border was out of his reach," said the defense official, who refused to be identified.