

Soviet airline pilots, passengers describe UFO

MOSCOW (AP) — Pilots and passengers aboard a Soviet airliner have reported encountering a star-like UFO they said illuminated the ground with a dazzling beam and escorted them to their destination, a Soviet newspaper reported Wednesday.

The newspaper Trud quoted a Soviet scientist who specializes in unusual phenomena, including unidentified flying objects, as saying the occurrence was "undoubtedly abnormal."

An Aeroflot domestic flight from

the Georgian capital of Tbilisi to Tallinn in Estonia was approaching Minsk when "what appeared to be a large, unblinking star suddenly shed a thin ray of light which fell plumb down on the ground" from an altitude of 25 to 30 miles, the newspaper said.

"Ground control at the time registered splashes on its screens in the same part of air space," Trud said. The date of the flight was not given.

All four crew members reported that they "could see distinctly everything down in the sector of the

ground illuminated by the cone-shaped shaft of light — the houses and the roads," the newspaper said.

It said the ray suddenly focused on the plane.

"The pilots saw a dazzling white spot surrounded by concentric colored rings," Trud said.

The UFO then reportedly zoomed toward the airliner "at flashing speed," leaving a green cloud in its wake.

The UFO positioned itself beside the plane at an altitude of 33,000 feet and accompanied it for the rest

of the flight

Nikolai Zheltukhin, a corresponding member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and deputy chairman of a state commission on unexplained phenomena, told Trud the occurrence "is indeed of interest, although the commission already knows of similar cases."

"That the object reversed course instantaneously and reached the ground with a ray of light of unusual intensity from a very high altitude is undoubtedly abnormal," Zheltukhin was quoted as saying.