

U.F.O. AHEAD

Jet reports mysterious sighting

LONDON — A British Airways jetliner made a diversion over the Soviet Union to avoid what the crew reported as an unidentified flying object, airline spokesman Alan Solloway said Saturday.

The incident occurred in April, but first came to light in a front-page article Saturday in The Times of London.

Solloway confirmed that the crew of the Boeing 747 jumbo jet reported seeing a UFO over the Soviet Union on April 22 while flying from London to Bangkok, Thailand.

He said it was the first such case in the airline's history.

"We have had crews report seeing space debris burning, but we can't recall a UFO being sighted and being logged as a UFO," Solloway said.

"Usually, there is a scientific explanation for whatever was seen, but there doesn't seem to be a scientific explanation for this."

The Times said all five crew members reported seeing an object with twinkling lights fly directly toward them and then vanish quickly over the Kazhakstan horizon.

"It was definitely not an aircraft," the paper quoted First Officer Anthony Colin, 42, as saying. "Of that I am positive. None of us had ever seen anything like it before. We are all bitter, cynical aviators who like a scientific explanation for everything. But this has got us foxed."

Howard Miles, a British satellite specialist, said that the crew could have seen a satellite re-entering the atmosphere. But he said satellites normally burn up at an altitude of about 80 miles and the aircraft was flying at about 10 miles.

"It must therefore have been an optical illusion, with the actual lights being much further away," he was quoted as saying.

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Briton reports UFO

LONDON — A British airline pilot said he had to take evasive action to avoid hitting a mystery object over the Soviet republic of Kazakhstan, the Times of London reported Saturday.

The Times said the crew of five of a British Airways jumbo jet, on a flight to Bangkok in April, were baffled by the object with twinkling lights that flew directly toward them before disappearing at high speed over the horizon.

An airline spokesman said Soviet air traffic control had confirmed that there were no other aircraft in the area at the time. He suggested the most plausible explanation was that it was a piece of satellite re-entering the Earth's atmosphere.

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