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British jet diverted over U.S.S.R. to avoid what crew calls a UFO

LONDON (AP) — 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 yesterday.

The incident occurred in April, but came to light yesterday in the London Times.

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. "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."

Solloway said the crew checked with Soviet air traffic control, which reported no other aircraft were in the vicinity.