

Soviet data on aliens is—well, a bit sketchy

Boy's drawing shown on TV

Associated Press

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Soviet TV viewers got a chance Wednesday night to see the aliens that created a cosmic sensation with their reported landing in the town of Voronezh — but only in a child's scribbled drawing.

The Soviet nightly news program *Vremya* broadcast a report from Voronezh showing the spot among yellow-leaved birches where, according to the official news agency Tass, scientists confirmed that an unearthly craft had touched down.

The picture, by a child who claimed to have witnessed the landing, showed a glowing two-legged sphere with a smiling stick figure inside.

Tass made a worldwide splash Monday with its straight-faced report on towering, pin-headed aliens who emerged from a spaceship that landed in a park in Voronezh, 300 miles southeast of Moscow. Since then, scientists have disparaged the report and attributed it to rising sensationalism in the Soviet press under "glasnost," or greater openness.

The *Vremya* report, although more skeptical in tone than that by Tass, offered without comment an interview with schoolboy

Vasya Surin, a purported witness to the "close encounter."

"We were scared," said Vasya, who appeared to be about 11. "It hovered over this tree. Then the door opened and a tall person of about three meters (nearly 10 feet) looked out. He didn't have a head, or shoulders either. He just had a kind of hump. There he had three eyes, two on each side and one in the middle."

Vasya said the alien had two holes instead of a real nose, and could not turn his head, so he had to swivel his middle eye.

An aviation engineer from a nearby factory said he and his colleagues measured the landing area and found an intense magnetic field there.

But the *Vremya* report concluded with some of the many factors that detract from the credibility of the sighting:

- No adult witnesses could be found even though a large apartment house overlooked the site.

- The story spread only a week after the supposed event when an article appeared in the local newspaper.

- Supposed alien minerals turned out to be of the earthly type.

"Only one thing is clear," concluded Soviet TV reporter L. Maximov. "It's early to tell. What's needed is research. And not by Voronezh enthusiasts, but by experts."

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