

3-eyed alien zaps youth, Soviet news media report

By John-Thor Dahlburg
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MOSCOW — A three-eyed alien with a robot sidekick landed in a UFO and made a boy vanish by zapping him with a pistol, a Soviet newspaper reported yesterday, the second day of strange tales from the state-run media.

But as the bizarre saga of the space invasion of the city of Voronezh continued to unfold yesterday, a scientist whose words were used to support initial reports voiced doubts and said he was in part misquoted.

"Don't believe all you hear from Tass," Genrikh Silanov, head of the Voronezh Geophysical Laboratory, cautioned in a telephone interview from Voronezh. "We never gave them part of what they published."

On Monday, Tass, the official Soviet news agency, told the world that scientists had confirmed an alien spaceship carrying giant people with tiny heads had landed in Voronezh, a city of more than 800,000 people about 300 miles southeast of Moscow.

As many as three 13-foot aliens left the spacecraft, described as a large, shining ball, and walked in the park with a small robot, Tass reported. A Tass duty officer stood by the story.

The report spawned rumors in Moscow, including one that the aliens told Voronezh residents the Earth would be destroyed by the year 2000 if people continued to pollute it.

Nevertheless, a Communist Party paper, whose avowed mission is to write about culture, was the only major national daily to follow up the Tass report, indicating that more authoritative newspapers such as Pravda considered the topic too hot

to handle.

Sovietskaya Kultura said its coverage was motivated by "the golden rule of journalism — the reader must know everything."

"Of course, it's hard to believe in what happened in the town," the paper reported from Voronezh. "It's even more difficult to explain."

The daily quoted witnesses as saying the UFO flew into Voronezh on Sept 27. At 6:30 p.m., youths playing soccer saw a pink glow in the sky, then saw a deep red ball about 10

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yards in diameter, it said. The ball circled, vanished, then reappeared minutes later and hovered, it added.

A crowd rushed to the site and through an open hatch saw a "three-eyed alien" about 10 feet tall, clad in silvery overalls and bronze-colored boots and wearing a disk on his chest, the paper said.

The UFO landed. Two creatures, one apparently a robot, exited. A boy screamed with fear, but when the alien gazed at him, with eyes shining, he fell silent, unable to move. On-

lookers screamed, and the UFO and the creatures disappeared.

About five minutes later, they reappeared. The alien had a "pistol" — a tube about 20 inches long, which it pointed at an unidentified 16-year-old boy, making him disappear. The alien went inside the sphere, which took off. At the same time, the boy reappeared.

"Children and eyewitnesses of the abnormal phenomenon have been questioned by police workers and journalists," the paper wrote, adding: "There are no discrepancies in the description of the sphere itself or the actions of the 'aliens.' Moreover, all the children who became witnesses to this event are still afraid, even now."

The newspaper said the local branch of a nationwide group that investigates "abnormal phenomena" was probing the landing. The investigators include specialists in biology and physics, it said.

Mr. Silanov, who said he belongs to the group, cast doubt on the Tass report that quoted him as saying the aliens left behind two rocks resembling sandstone of a deep red color that cannot be found anywhere.

"The rock they described as extraterrestrial is in fact a piece of iron oxide which could easily have originated on Earth," said Mr. Silanov, 50.

He said there was indeed "a landing site" or something resembling one in Voronezh. But he said the same could result from an underground pipe or cable or an underground reservoir.

Mr. Silanov also said the testimony of children between the ages of 11 and 14, who said they witnessed the landing, was not consistent with regard to how the aliens looked.

Meanwhile, a Tass editor said two Moscow-based reporters had been dispatched to Voronezh to check on the report on the UFO filed by local Tass correspondent Vladimir Lebdeev, a man he termed a "very serious" journalist.

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