



*Trends in Soviet Civil Aviation*

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## TRENDS IN SOVIET CIVIL AVIATION

### SUMMARY

1. Aeroflot, the Soviet national airline, is the world's largest. Linking more than 3,700 locations in the USSR and 67 foreign countries over a 500,000-mile route network, the airline carried 90 million persons in 1974, about 20% of the world total (see the map and Table 1). The airline's vast supply of equipment and personnel is geared primarily to domestic operations, which account for 95% of passengers carried. Aeroflot's international services extend over a broad but thinly served network, concentrated in Europe but stretching from the Western Hemisphere to the Far East.

2. To improve the airline's image, Soviet aviation policy shifted in the 1970s from the expansion of routes to an upgrading of services. In the 1960s, new routes extending beyond existing European services to the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia had been the focus of attention. Most were established for political reasons and remain uneconomic to this day. As Aeroflot filled out its network around the world, the Soviets began to stress fleet modernization, improved quality of passenger services, and operational safety.

3. The improvements in Aeroflot operations have been impressive, enhancing the airline's international image. Despite these gains, Aeroflot does not pose a commercial threat to major international airlines in the West. Its international services do not offer the frequency of flights or the route alternatives necessary to garner a significant portion of the highly competitive international travel market. The Soviets appear content to have Aeroflot provide limited service on extensive international routes to maintain political and economic ties and to augment Soviet military airlift capability.

### DISCUSSION

4. Civil aviation in the USSR celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1973. From an amalgamation of small regional carriers operating primarily in European Russia, Aeroflot was established as the Soviet national airline in 1932. At the outbreak of World War II, Aeroflot's network extended some 100,000 miles --

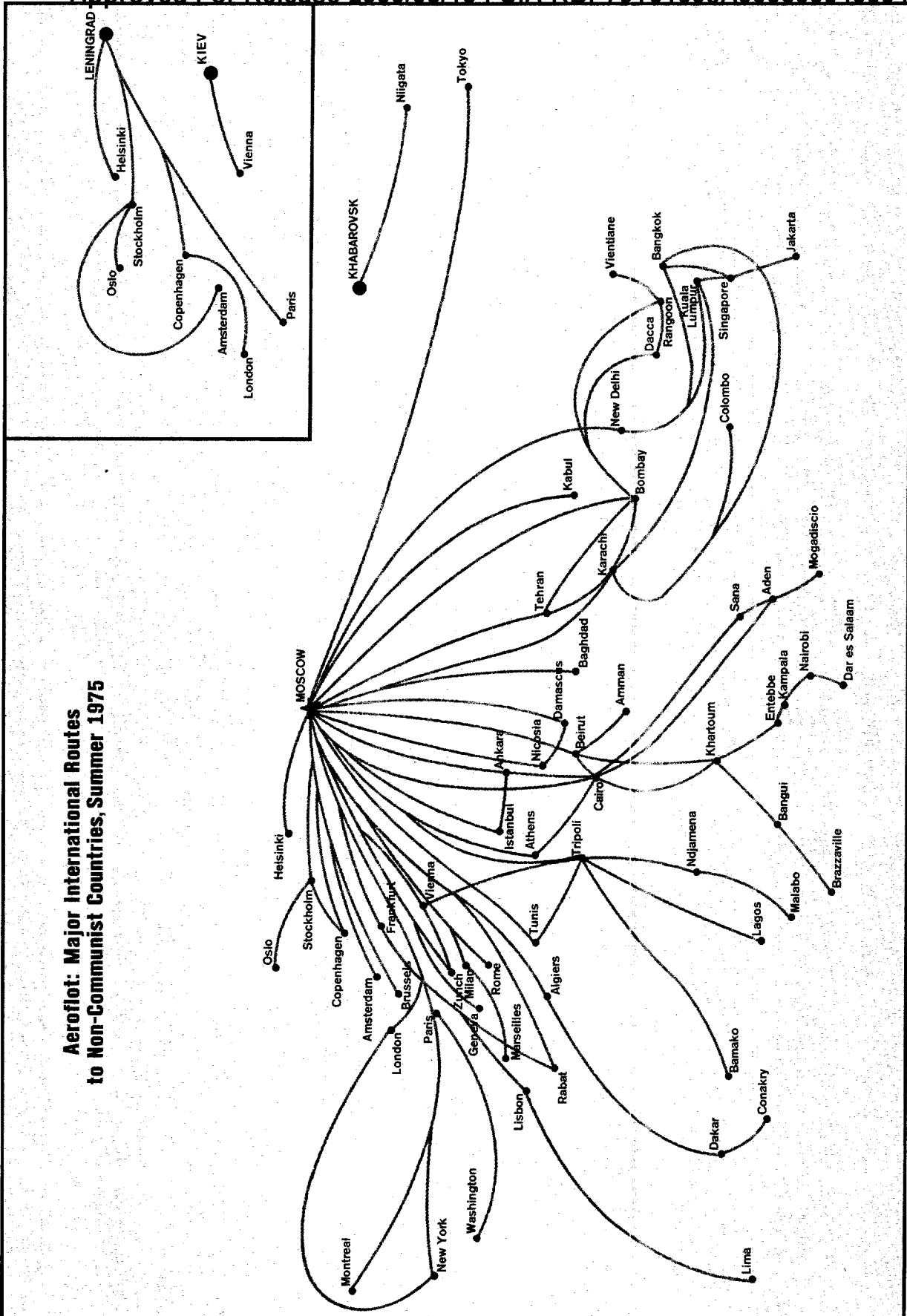
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**Aeroflot: Major International Routes to Non-Communist Countries, Summer 1975**



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Table 1

Soviet Bilateral Air Agreements and Inaugural Date of Aeroflot Service:  
Non-Communist Countries, Cuba, and Yugoslavia  
Summer 1975

Country	Year		Country	Year	
	Agreement	Service		Agreement	Service
Afghanistan	1956	1957	Mali	1962	1962
Algeria	1964	1964	Mauritania	1974	....
Austria	1955	1968	Mauritius	1973	....
Bangladesh	1973	1973	Morocco	1962	1962
Belgium	1958	1958	Netherlands	1958	1958
Burma	1961	1959	Nigeria	1967	1969
Burundi	1973	....	Norway	1956	1969
Canada	1966	1966	Pakistan	1963	1963
Central African Republic	1965	1969	Peru	1973	1974
Chad	1974	1974	Portugal	1974	1975
Congo	1964	1969	Rwanda	1973	....
Cuba	1962	1962	Senegal	1965	1968
Denmark	1956	1967	Singapore	1969	1970
Egypt	1958	1959	Somali Republic	1963	1964
Equitorial Guinea	1973	1974	South Yemen	1969	1969
Finland	1955	1955	Sri Lanka	1964	1964
France	1958	1958	Sudan	1962	1962
Greece	1973	1973	Sweden	1956	1967
Guinea	1962	1962	Switzerland	1966	1967
India	1958	1958	Syria	1962	1963
Indonesia	1961	1961	Tanzania	1965	1967
Iran	1964	1964	Thailand	1971	1971
Iraq	1962	1964	Tunisia	1964	1964
Italy	1965	1965	Turkey	1961	1968
Japan	1966	1966	Uganda	1965	1969
Jordan	1970	1970	United Kingdom	1957	1958
Kenya	1965	1970	United States	1966	1968
Laos	1970	1970	West Germany	1971	1972
Lebanon	1966	1966	Yemen	1967	1967
Libya	1963	1970	Yugoslavia	1955	1957
Luxembourg	1975	....	Zaire	1974	....
Malaysia	1969	1970			

almost exclusively domestic – and carried 350,000 passengers annually. Following the war, the Soviets began the slow process of reestablishing former services and adding new routes.

5. By the early 1950s, prewar services were largely restored, and the Soviets started to develop an international route network. With Moscow as the hub, flights were initiated to Eastern Europe and then to most West European capitals. Except for service to the Iberian peninsula, West Germany, and Greece, Aeroflot's European routes were complete by the end of the decade.

6. Building on its European services, the USSR turned its attention in the 1960s to establishing service to the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia. Toward the end of the decade, trans-Atlantic operations were inaugurated to Canada and the United States. By 1970, Aeroflot operated some 120 international services weekly - 58 weekly flights to 42 non-Communist countries and 62 flights per week to 10 communist countries. Aircraft used in these international services were outdated, delays were commonplace, and fatal accidents occurred at a rate above comparable operations in the West. Criticism of the airline's operations became so widespread that it began to surface in Soviet literature.

#### **Fleet Modernization**

7. To counter growing criticism of Aeroflot's aging inventory of civil aircraft, the USSR began a major modernization program in the early 1970s. Deliveries have accelerated in each of the past five years, with Aeroflot's current jet inventory approaching 1,000, of which approximately 450 have been added since 1971 (see Tables 2 and 3). The YAK-40, with a short field capability, constitutes more than half of the jet inventory, which also includes increased numbers of the improved medium-range TU-134As, the medium- to long-range TU-154s, and the long-range IL-62Ms, the flagship of the Aeroflot fleet.

8. Despite the addition of newer jets, the Soviets continue to maintain a fleet of more than 1,400 turboprop aircraft, about half of which are the short-range, 50-passenger AN-24s. Similarly, multi-engine piston aircraft still account for between 850 and 950 units. Except for use of the AN-24s in domestic service, the turboprop and piston aircraft are not often assigned to regularly scheduled service. They are, however, pressed into charter service during the summer tourist season.

9. Along with the planned addition of about 150 currently produced aircraft a year to Aeroflot's inventory, several new designs are scheduled to be introduced during the next few years. These include:

Table 2

Aeroflot Inventory of High-Performance Aircraft<sup>1</sup>

Type and Model	NATO Destination	1960	1965	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974
<b>Total</b>		<b>365</b>	<b>782</b>	<b>1,668</b>	<b>1,774</b>	<b>1,966</b>	<b>2,147</b>	<b>2,411</b>
Jet		191	227	430	530	658	784	977
TU-104 (A and B)	Camel	190	150	155	146	143	141	140
TU-124	Cookpot	1	77	77	75	74	72	70
TU-134 (Standard and A)	Crusty	....	....	50	62	97	125	145
TU-154	Careless	....	....	....	3	19	37	52
IL-62/M	Classic	....	....	28	44	45	47	58
YAK-40 (Standard and B)	Codling	....	....	120	200	280	360	510
IL-76	Candid	....	....	....	....	....	2	2
Turboprop		174	555	1,238	1,244	1,308	1,363	1,434
AN-10	Cat	68	84	86	85	83	81	79
AN-12	Cub	3	52	150	153	158	161	165
AN-24	Coke	....	91	591	615	652	690	731
IL-18	Coot	93	300	380	362	360	357	356
TU-114	Cleat	10	28	31	29	27	24	24
AN-26	Clank	....	....	....	....	28	50	79

1. In addition to the high-performance aircraft in Aeroflot's current inventory, the fleet includes from 850 to 950 multi-engine piston aircraft. For the most part, propeller-driven aircraft are used in training operations and during peak traffic periods during summer schedules.

*The Supersonic TU-144* Soviet aviation officials have indicated that the TU-144 may begin limited domestic scheduled service by the end of 1975. Historically, the Soviets have been overly optimistic about inaugural flights.

*The IL-76* Despite initial Soviet claims that this longer range cargo transport was for civil use, most of the production thus far has gone to the military. Aeroflot has acquired a few of the aircraft, and they are probably in service on a few domestic cargo routes.

*The YAK-42* Basically an enlarged version of the highly successful YAK-40, the 100-120 passenger YAK-42 is slated to replace the YAK-40 on routes where growth in traffic demand is expected to be rapid. The YAK-42, which first flew in early March, is currently in flight testing.

Table 3  
Major Characteristics of Soviet High-Performance Transport Aircraft  
Summer 1975

	Engines		Cruise Speed (Knots)	Range (Nautical Miles)		Cargo Capacity (Pounds)		Passenger Capacity	
	Number	Type		Normal Payload	Maximum Payload	Normal	Maximum	Normal <sup>1</sup>	Troops
Jet									
TU-104A	2	Turbojet	445	2,200	1,550	15,900	29,100	70	70
TU-104B	2	Turbojet	445	2,150	1,600	18,300	29,600	100	100
TU-124	2	Turbofan	390	1,580	1,250	13,000	16,425	56	56
TU-134	2	Turbofan	365	2,350	1,530	12,300	20,400	72	75
TU-134A	2	Turbofan	365	2,470	1,520	12,250	22,000	76	80
TU-144	4	Turbofan	540 Subsonic MACH (0.92)	2,200	N.A.	...	...	...	...
			1,260 Super-sonic	3,160	N.A.	26,500	28,000	98-120	120
			MACH (2.2)						
TU-154	3	Turbofan	465	3,190 <sup>2</sup>	2,330	35,700 <sup>2</sup>	49,800	120-158	200
IL-62/M	4	Turbofan	454	4,910-5,900	3,810-4,590	29,000-31,580	58,650-58,900	143-198	198
IL-76	4	Turbofan	417	5,310	2,860	34,000	88,200	...	145
YAK-40	3	Turbofan	265	820	310	4,175	7,275	27-35	35
Turboprop									
AN-8	2	Turboprop	285	2,650	800	15,900	27,700	...	75
AN-10	4	Turboprop	330	1,450	540	20,600	32,000	84-100	100
AN-12 <sup>3</sup>	4	Turboprop	315-320	1,670-3,920	165-750	9,860-21,060	35,000-44,100	0-14	90
AN-24	2	Turboprop	255	1,150	430	8,100	12,600	50	50
IL-18	4	Turboprop	320	3,120	2,020	21,400	33,000	73-111	111
IL-18D	4	Turboprop	325	4,250	2,400	15,000	33,000	73-111	111
TU-114	4	Turboprop	415	5,500	4,000	34,000	66,000	120-220	220

1. Based on observed seating configurations for various models.  
2. As a production line option, the TU-154 can have additional built-in fuel capacity, increasing range and decreasing normal payload.  
3. There are five versions of the AN-12.



*The IL-86 Airbus* Despite many delays, Soviet officials intend to move forward with production of the IL-86 -- the USSR's wide-bodied aircraft. Although its current estimated range of 1,500-2,000 miles is less than half that of Western models, the aircraft would be well suited for many of Aeroflot's high-density domestic routes and international services to Europe. Under the most optimistic projections, the IL-86 is unlikely to begin service before 1979.

### **Service Improvements**

10. The modernization program has allowed Aeroflot to upgrade operations by increasing the frequency of flights, improving adherence to schedules, and providing more comfortable travel. New jets have been added to almost all of Aeroflot's international services (see Tables 4 and 5) and to more than half the domestic routes. For the most part, the only international flights using older models are those where airfields place constraints on the type of aircraft serving the route.

#### *Domestic*

11. The most dramatic changes in service in recent years have occurred on Aeroflot's domestic operations. These services, which link all the major Soviet cities, have traditionally been the last to receive new equipment. During the past three years, however, newer aircraft have been added to major domestic routes in increasing numbers, providing far more frequent flights and expansion of new routes.

12. Much of the improvement in domestic operations stems from the introduction of the YAK-40. The 30-passenger trijet, which is capable of operating from unimproved airfields, is rapidly replacing the aging AN-24. In the past three years, it has made new services possible to more than 200 rural locations in Eastern Russia and Siberia. For medium-range and longer flights, the TU-134A, TU-154, and IL-62M have replaced about half of the 356 IL-18 turboprop aircraft in Aeroflot's inventory.

#### *International*

13. Aeroflot's international service also has been upgraded and expanded with newer aircraft and some additional flights. Of the more than 260 weekly international flights most are now served by TU-134As, TU-154s, and IL-62Ms, many of which were put into service since 1972. Outdated TU-104s and TU-124s, and in some cases IL-18s, had previously been used on many of these routes.

Table 4

Aeroflot Schedule of International Flights to Communist Countries  
Summer 1975

Routes	Flight Number	Flights per Week	Type of Aircraft
Moscow-Warsaw	101	Daily	TU-154(4)/TU-134(3)
Moscow-East Berlin	111	Daily	TU-154
Moscow-East Berlin	113	Daily	TU-154
Moscow-East Berlin	115	Daily	TU-134/TU-154
Moscow-Dresden	119	Daily	TU-134
Moscow-Leipzig	121	4	TU-134
Moscow-Budapest	131/133	Daily	TU-134(2)/TU-154(5)
Moscow-Prague	141	Daily	TU-154
Moscow-Prague	143	Daily	TU-134
Moscow-Bratislava	145	1	TU-134
Moscow-Bucharest	151	Daily	TU-134(2)/TU-154(1)
Moscow-Kiev-Bucharest	153	1	TU-134
Moscow-Sofia	171	6	TU-154
Moscow-Varna	175	Daily	TU-154
Moscow-Burgas	177	6	TU-154
Moscow-Sofia	295	1	TU-154
Moscow-Budapest	409	2	IL-62
Moscow-Tehran-Bombay-Rangoon- Vientiane-Hanoi	541	2	IL-18
Moscow-Omsk-Irkutsk-Ulan Bator	563	3	TU-154
Moscow-Omsk-Irkutsk-Pyongyang	567	1	TU-154
Moscow-Peking	571	1	IL-62
Leningrad-Vilnius (1)-Warsaw	601/03/05	3	TU-134
Leningrad-East Berlin	609	6	IL-18
Leningrad-Budapest	615	2	TU-134
Leningrad-Warsaw-Budapest	617	2	TU-104(1)/TU-134(1)
Leningrad-Prague	621	3	TU-104
Leningrad-Burgas	627	1	TU-104
Leningrad-Sofia	629	1	TU-104
Kiev-Warsaw	661	4	TU-134
Kiev-Budapest	671	3	IL-18
Kiev-Bratislava	677	2	TU-134
Kiev-Sofia	685	2	TU-104
Kiev-Burgas	684	2	TU-104
Minsk-East Berlin	691	8	TU-134
Khabarovsk-Pyongyang	697	1	TU-154

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Table 5

Aeroflot Schedule of International Flights to Non-Communist Countries,  
Cuba, and Yugoslavia  
Summer 1975

Routes	Flight Number	Flights per Week	Type of Aircraft
Moscow-Belgrade	161	Daily	TU-134(2)/TU-154(5)
Moscow-Zagreb	165	1	TU-154
Moscow-Helsinki	203	4	TU-134
Moscow-Stockholm-Oslo	211	2	TU-134
Moscow-Stockholm-Copenhagen	217	1	IL-62
Moscow-Amsterdam	227/29	2	TU-154(1)/IL-62(1)
Moscow-Brussels	231	2	TU-154
Moscow-London	241/43	5	IL-62
Moscow-Paris	251/53	6	IL-62
Moscow-Frankfurt	255/59	4	TU-154(3)/IL-62(1)
Moscow-Vienna	261	5	TU-134(3)/TU-154(2)
Moscow-Zurich	265	1	TU-154
Moscow-Vienna-Zurich	267	1	TU-154
Moscow-Kiev-Zurich	269	1	TU-154
Moscow-Geneva	271	1	TU-154
Moscow-Rome	281/83	3	IL-62
Moscow-Milan	285	1	TU-154
Moscow-Milan-Marseilles	287	1	TU-154
Moscow-Sofia-Athens	295	1	TU-154
Moscow-Kiev(1)-Paris-Montreal	301	2	IL-62
Moscow-London-New York	311	2	IL-62
Moscow-Paris-New York	313	1	IL-62
Moscow-Paris-Washington	317	1	IL-62
Moscow-Frankfurt-Lisbon-Santa Maria <sup>1</sup> -Havana	331	1	IL-62
Moscow-Rabat-Havana	333	3	IL-62
Moscow-Frankfurt-Lisbon-Santa Maria <sup>1</sup> -Havana-Lima	335	1	IL-62
Moscow-Budapest-Algiers	407/409	2	IL-62
Moscow-Budapest <sup>1</sup> -Algiers-Dakar-Conakry	411	2	IL-62
Moscow-Tunis-Tripoli-Bamako	415	1	IL-18
Moscow-Budapest-Tripoli-Ndjamena-Malabo	417	1	IL-18
Moscow-Vienna-Tripoli-Lagos	421	1	IL-18
Moscow-Beirut-Cairo-Khartoum-Bangui-Brazzaville	431	1	TU-154

Table 5

Aeroflot Schedule of International Flights to Non-Communist Countries,  
Cuba, and Yugoslavia  
Summer 1975  
(Continued)

Routes	Flight Number	Flights per Week	Type of Aircraft
Moscow-Beirut-Khartoum-Bangui- Brazzaville	433	1	TU-154
Moscow-Cairo	441	1	TU-154
Moscow-Odessa-Cairo-Khartoum- Entebbe-Kampala-Nairobi-Dar- es Salaam	445	1	TU-154
Moscow-Cairo-San'a-Aden- Mogadiscio	451	1	TU-154
Moscow-Cairo-Aden- Mogadiscio	453	1	TU-154
Moscow-Istanbul	501	1	TU-134
Moscow-Ankara-Istanbul	503	1	TU-134
Moscow-Beirut-Amman	505	1	TU-154
Moscow-Nicosia-Damascus	507	1	TU-154
Moscow-Yerevan-Beirut	509	1	TU-154
Yerevan-Beirut	511	1	TU-134
Moscow-Baghdad	513	1	TU-154
Moscow-Tehran	515	1	TU-154
Moscow-Nicosia	519	1	TU-154
Moscow-Damascus	517	1	TU-134
Moscow-Tashkent-Kabul	531	2	IL-18
Moscow-New Delhi	535	1	IL-62
Moscow-Tehran-Bombay-Rangoon- Vientiane-Hanoi	541	2	IL-18
Moscow-Tehran-Karachi- Colombo	543	1	IL-62
Moscow-Tehran-Bombay-Rangoon- Jakarta	547	1	IL-18
Moscow-Baghdad/Bombay-Dacca	549	2	TU-154
Copenhagen-Moscow-New Delhi- Bangkok-Singapore	551	1	IL-62
Copenhagen-Moscow-Bangkok- Singapore-Jakarta	553	1	IL-62
Moscow-Kuwait <sup>1</sup> -Colombo	545	1	IL-62
Moscow-Karachi-Kuala Lumpur	555	1	IL-62

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Table 5

Aeroflot Schedule of International Flights to Non-Communist Countries,  
Cuba, and Yugoslavia  
Summer 1975  
(Continued)

Routes	Flight Number	Flights per Week	Type of Aircraft
Moscow-New Delhi-Kuala Lumpur-Singapore	557	1	IL-62
Paris-Moscow-Tokyo	575	2	IL-62
Frankfurt-Moscow-Tokyo	577	1	IL-62
Copenhagen-Moscow-Tokyo	579	1	IL-62
London-Moscow-Tokyo	581	2	IL-62
Rome-Moscow-Tokyo	583	1	IL-62
Amsterdam-Moscow-Tokyo	585	1	IL-62
Leningrad-Belgrade	625	1	TU-134
Leningrad-Helsinki	631	4	TU-134
Leningrad-Stockholm-Amsterdam	633	1	TU-134
Leningrad-Stockholm-Oslo	635	1	TU-134
Leningrad-Copenhagen-London	637	1	TU-104
Leningrad-Helsinki	639	4	TU-134(3)/IL-18(1)
Leningrad-Paris	641	1	TU-104
Moscow-Leningrad-Paris	643	2	IL-62
Leningrad-Moscow-Geneva	645	1	TU-134
Leningrad-Hamburg	653	1	TU-134
Leningrad-Zurich	657	1	TU-134
Kiev-Vienna	681	2	TU-134
Khabarovsk-Niigata	695	1	TU-154

1. Technical stop only.

14. While new aircraft are being added to the inventory, the Soviets have tried to improve the airline's notoriously poor customer service. In 1973 the airline established an "Air Service Agency" under the Ministry of Civil Aviation to facilitate more efficient use of the civil fleet inventory and improve customer services such as ticketing, transfers, and scheduling. The recent purchase of an IBM reservation system for the Moscow area underscores the continuing priority of the program. According to most Western travelers, however, the Soviets have a long way to go to bring operations up to Western standards.

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### Enhanced Airlift Potential

15. The accelerated rate of delivery of modern aircraft during the past five years has enhanced Aeroflot's capacity to augment the USSR's military airlift potential. If 100% of the fleet were used and passenger and cargo aircraft were employed in their respective configurations, Aeroflot could airlift more than 150,000 passengers and 2,400 tons of cargo at any one time. In an actual airlift operation, as many as one-fourth of Aeroflot's resources could be used without seriously hampering scheduled domestic and international operations.

### Safety

16. Soviet complacency concerning civil aviation safety ended abruptly in late 1973 following a year-long series of accidents. During this period, at least 10 Aeroflot aircraft in scheduled service crashed, killing at least 500 persons. Although poor-quality on-board avionics and outdated air traffic control systems increased the probability of accidents, the primary causes of at least seven crashes were either pilot error, inclement weather, or a combination of both. In any event, the USSR launched a vigorous program to improve safety by:

establishing an Aviation Safety Committee within the Ministry of Civil Aviation to investigate safety procedures and probable causes of accidents;

upgrading operational testing of new civil aircraft and providing for more stringent preflight crew checks; and

studying Western air traffic control procedures and equipment for possible application in the USSR.

17. Soviet actions have improved safety and continue to receive high priority. The original safety committee was reorganized in June 1975 and renamed the Civil Aviation Flight Safety Commission. The new commission has broader enforcement powers and includes representatives from the Ministries of Aviation Industry, Radio Industry, Defense, and Communication Equipment. During the past 18 months, the frequency of accidents has dropped well below past periods. Only one fatal crash is known to have occurred thus far in 1975 -- a YAK-40 on a domestic flight went down near Batumi in mid-July killing 28 persons, including 4 crew members.

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### Negotiations and New Services

18. Since the early 1970s the Soviets have focused on Aeroflot's network in Sub-Saharan Africa and on laying the groundwork for expanded operations to Latin America. In Africa, air agreements have been concluded with Burundi, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Mauritania, Mauritius, Rwanda, and Zaire. Last December, scheduled Aeroflot flights began in Ndjamena in Chad and Malabo in Equatorial Guinea. Scheduled flights to the other five countries are likely to begin this year, virtually completing Aeroflot's network in Africa.

19. The Soviets are accelerating the pace of negotiations with several Latin American countries in an effort to fill the last major gap in Aeroflot's international network. Only Cuba and Peru are served currently. The Cuban service began more than a decade ago. Service to Peru was initiated as a technical stop en route to Santiago, Chile, in November 1972. Santiago service ended with the fall of the Allende government in September 1973. Soon after the USSR formalized its earlier accord with Peru and set up weekly service via Havana.

20. Aviation agreements are currently being discussed with Argentina, Ecuador, Mexico, and Venezuela, with more muted efforts under way in Brazil, Colombia, and Panama. The principal push is aimed at Mexico. Panama and Venezuela, where talks have been under way for more than a year, are more likely to reach agreement with the USSR.

21. Other Aeroflot services inaugurated within the past 5 years include access to Thailand (1971), West Germany (1972), Bangladesh and Greece (1973), and, most recently, to Portugal in March 1975. Most of these new services were incorporated as intermediate points on existing Aeroflot schedules.

### Outlook

22. Soviet efforts to modernize Aeroflot's aircraft inventory and to improve operations will continue over the next several years. Aeroflot's international route structure will expand to provide broad coverage of Latin America within the next 2 to 5 years. Introduction of new aircraft coupled with purchases of advanced avionics and improved air traffic control equipment will improve Aeroflot's safety record and allow for expansion of existing services. These changes should enhance Aeroflot's international prestige and provide the Soviet Union with one of the world's most varied fleets of civil aircraft.

23. Aeroflot attempts to bring its operations closer to Western standards will not overcome its relatively poor image, operational inefficiencies, and lack of passenger amenities. It is not expected to be a serious competitor in the international air transport market. Although Aeroflot might introduce an aggressive fare reduction campaign – especially in today's depressed aviation market – most foreign governments could counter by restricting Aeroflot landings and reducing fares on their national airlines.



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