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July 23, 1981

USSR-IRAN-ISRAEL: Aircraft Forced Down

Last weekend Soviet fighter aircraft apparently forced down a transport plane as it returned from Tehran after delivering arms and supplies from Israel. [REDACTED]

The CL-44 transport [REDACTED] owned by an Argentine air cargo firm--was intercepted near the Turkish-Soviet border by two Soviet fighters [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] TASS did not report the incident until yesterday, when Moscow claimed that the aircraft crashed after straying into Soviet airspace. [REDACTED]

The Argentine firm had contracted with the Israelis to deliver at least part of an estimated 5,000 tons of weapons and 300,000 tons of medical supplies and food to Iran beginning early this month. The cargo probably included critically needed aircraft spare parts and ammunition. The transport had just completed the third of 12 flights planned to Tehran and was returning to Cyprus when it was intercepted. [REDACTED]

Argentina has begun efforts to determine the status of the aircraft and its crew. So far the Soviets have been restrained in their communiques on the incident. The Israelis now will have to find another means to transport supplies to Iran, probably by ship. [REDACTED]

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S1-DI-0000058