

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE
USSR TRANS-POLAR AVIATORS

THE ROSE GARDEN

12:55 P.M. EDT

Ambassador Dobrynin, General Belyakov, General Baidukov, Colonel Chkalov:

Let me welcome all of you to the White House. I know this is the second experience for the two Generals and the first experience of Colonel Chkalov.

In 1937, these two Generals, and another, flew from Moscow to Vancouver, Washington, in 62 hours, and this plane is a duplicate of the plane that they flew on this historic flight.

The three Soviet military personnel who are here with us here today spent several days in Vancouver last week in a celebration of the flight that took place almost 40 years ago.

I was just looking at the logbook, in English, that showed the various incidents that took place as they flew on this really historic flight in 1937, and the three gentlemen here within the last week or so flew in a modern Russian jet. It took them ten hours.

So, the flight that they took almost 40 years ago took six times as long as the flight they made over the same area in 1975.

General Belyakov has just presented to me this replica of the aircraft that they flew in, a single-engine, piston-driven plane that the two of them, and the father of the Colonel made, in this flight from the Soviet Union to the United States.

But, the point I think is appropriate to make is: This warm welcome given to the Soviet pilots is an indication of the progress we have made in a people-to-people exchange, which is the result of, I think, the betterment of relations between the Soviet Union and the United States.

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It is our hope that incidents like this can be expanded in the months ahead in the best interests of the United States, as well as the Soviet Union, and others, and to broaden our exchange and widen our friendship in the best interests of not only our people, but the people of the world as a whole.

I thank you very, very much, General.

END (AT 12:59 P.M. EDT)