

Two MiG-29s, AN-225 land at Elmendorf for refueling

by Don Hoak
for the Tundra Times

Another chapter in Soviet-American relations has been written. For the first time in 44 years, Soviet military aircraft flew into Alaskan airspace on a friendly mission.

The occasion was the arrival of two Soviet MiG-29 fighters and an AN-225 transport.

The planes made a refueling stop at Elmendorf Air Force Base Aug. 6 on their way to the Abbotsford International Air Show in Vancouver, B.C.

The arrival also marked the first time that either aircraft has landed in North America.

Representatives from the U.S. Air Force were on hand to greet the Soviet

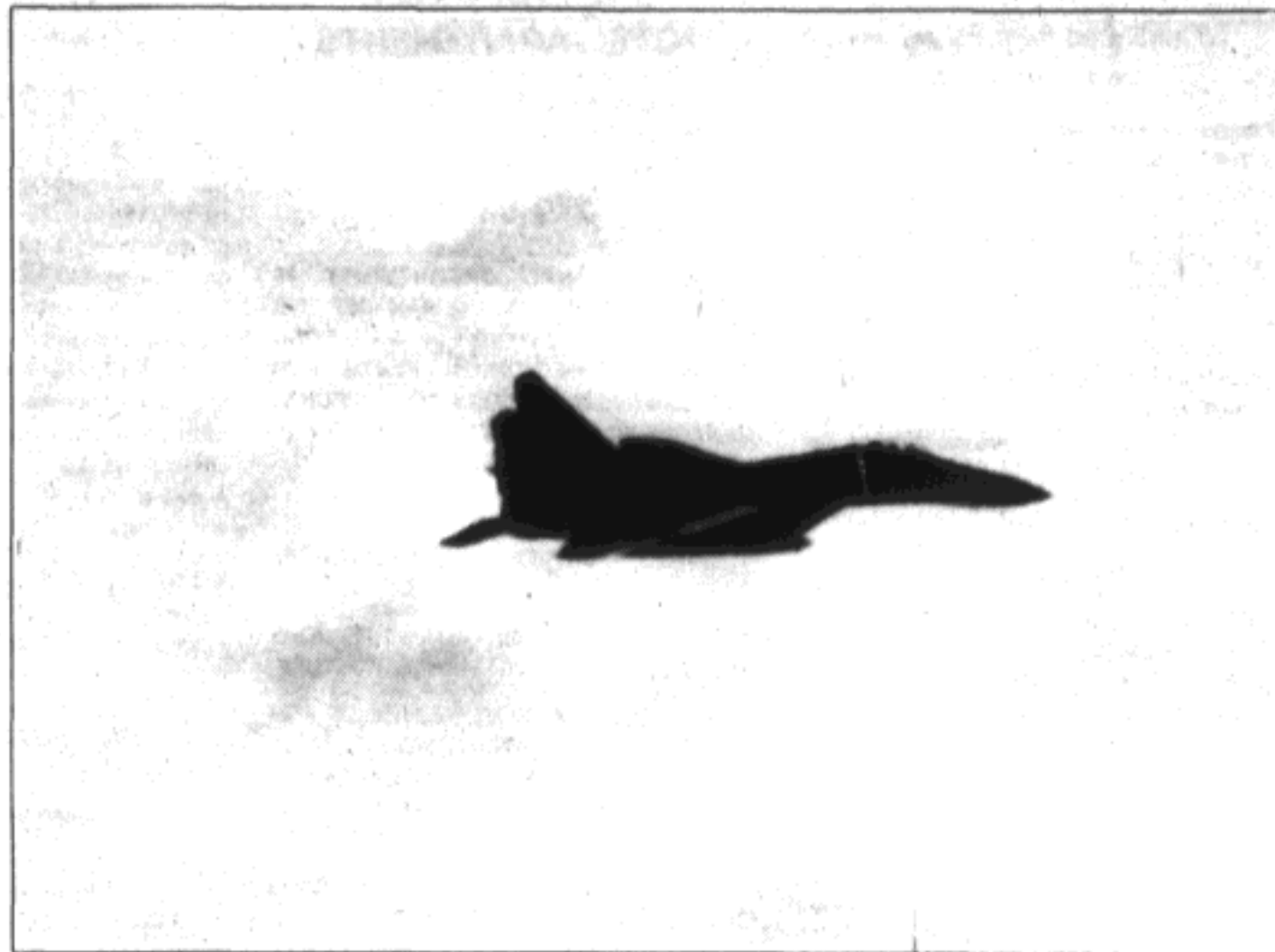
guests, including Lt. Gen. Thomas McInerney, commander of the Alaska Command.

"I am happy that relations between our two countries have warmed up and that friendship prevails," said Gen. Vadim Petroff, the top-ranking Soviet military guest.

The Soviet aircraft were escorted from the point they entered Alaskan airspace to Elmendorf by Alaskan Air Command F-15s.

"It was like having any distinguished visitor in your home. You accompany them, don't just let them walk anywhere they want," said one F-15 pilot, Capt. Rich Armstrong.

The aircraft will make another stop at Elmendorf Tuesday on their return to the Soviet Union.



U.S. Air Force photo

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