

Two Soviet Cadets Jump Tall Ship in Baltimore

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Body

Two Soviet cadets on a sailing **ship** left their **ship** Monday, apparently seeking asylum in the United States.

The **two** sailors, whom the **Soviet** Embassy identified as Alexei Zolotarev and Alexei Litovka, are both in their early twenties. They left the **ship** Monday afternoon, running toward the Immigration and Naturalization Service office in downtown **Baltimore**, according to the **Baltimore** Sun. The **ship** left on schedule at 9 a.m. today for Germany.

The INS said the sailors were safe but would not comment on whether they had sought asylum.

A spokesman at the **Soviet** Embassy in Washington, who declined to give his name, said the sailors were civilians, but otherwise declined to comment.

The sailors were **cadets** aboard the Kruzenshtern, a four-masted wooden **ship** visiting **Baltimore** as part of an educational and goodwill mission sponsored by Operation Sail, a private group that arranges trips of **tall ships**, older, multimasted sailing vessels. The **Soviet ship** arrived in **Baltimore** July 11 after a nine-day stay in Norfolk.

The **ship** had 233 people on board, including 160 **cadets**, according to Operation Sail Executive Director Mary Sue McCarthy. The **ship** is based in Tallin, Estonia.

McCarthy said the sailors were enrolled in a program run by the **Soviet** Ministry of Fisheries that trains young men to sail fishing boats. She said sailors on the **ship** had been involved in seminars on oil pollution control and had gone on agricultural tours during their stay here.

She said the **ship**'s captain hopes to return to **Baltimore** next summer, despite Monday's incident.

The incident "never came up in conversation this morning" with the captain, McCarthy said. "They gave us every indication they will be trying to come back."

Duke Austin, an INS spokesman, said defections are becoming more common as more **Soviets** travel abroad. In 1990, Austin said, 1,043 **Soviets** requested asylum in the United States. In 1989, 243 **Soviets** sought asylum in the United States.

"As the doors of the **Soviet** Union open up and more people are allowed to travel, more people can get to the United States," he said. "Therefore more people can ask for asylum. This [incident] is not unusual."

Graphic

PHOTO, LARISSA MRYSZUK SAYS GOODBYE TO **SOVIET** SAILOR DENITRIUS KOLOMPIETZ. AP

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