

Beat: Miscellaneous

British fighter jet threatens to shoot down cargo plane

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USPA News - British fighter jets were deployed Wednesday and responded at supersonic speeds when a Latvian cargo plane near London failed to make contact with air traffic control, leading them to issue a stark warning that their aircraft would be shot down if they failed to comply. The incident began just before 5 p.m. local time when the civilian aircraft, belonging to Latvian cargo airline RAF-Avia, failed to answer radio calls from air traffic control as it flew southeast of London.

Two Royal Air Force (RAF) Typhoon aircraft were subsequently launched from RAF station Coningsby in Lincolnshire to intercept the cargo plane. "To fulfill their quick reaction role, the Typhoons were cleared to travel at supersonic speed," an RAF spokesperson said, explaining the loud boom heard by many residents in the region. "Apologies if we startled you during the successful intercept this afternoon - we only go supersonic over land when absolutely necessary." Just after 5 p.m., as the Antonov An-26 aircraft approached the British capital and continued to remain out of contact, the fighter jets issued a stark warning to the crew of the cargo plane, according to an audio recording. "I am instructed by Her Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom to warn you that, if you do not respond immediately to my orders, you will be shot down," one of the Typhoons warned. Communications were restored soon thereafter and the cargo plane safely landed at London Stansted Airport at about 5:20 p.m. "All three people who were on board have been spoken to by police," Essex Police spokeswoman Emma Thomas said. "It was established that everything was in order and reason for the short loss of communication was due to a change in airspace jurisdiction." Thomas said police were not pursuing a further investigation and that the aircraft was allowed to continue its journey to Birmingham.

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