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HONOLULU -- South Pacific Island Airways, grounded by the Federal Aviation Administration after one of its flights nearly strayed into Soviet airspace, can continue flying for seven days while the shutdown is reviewed, a federal appeals court judge ruled Tuesday. But 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Herbert Choy told the company to stay away from the polar route that got it in trouble two weeks ago when one of its jets veered off course and flew toward a strategic Soviet military post.

After a closed-door session to hear SPIA's emergency motion, Choy said the FAA grounding on Saturday had a 'significant impact' and should be delayed until the full court reviews it. The FAA said it issued the shutdown order because SPIA's flights over the North Pole were unauthorized and the crews were not qualified for polar navigation. SPIA director of administration Tom Mahar said service was to start again Tuesday afternoon with a flight to Tahiti.

American Samoa Gov. Peter Coleman, meanwhile, had urged the FAA to let SPIA resume service to Pago Pago and routes connecting Manua Islands, Western Samoa and Tonga. He said the shutdown stopped needed service across a large area of the South Pacific. In the petition filed Monday, SPIA alleged the FAA acted arbitrarily and capriciously' in grounding the airline, which is the primary air link between the United States and American Samoa.

An SPIA charter flight was on the polar route from Anchorage to Amsterdam with 124 passengers, including 124 Fiji troops heading to join the United Nations' peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon, when the Sept. 30 incident occurred. Airline officials initially denied the plane flew dangerously close to a key Soviet military base on the Kola Peninsula, but at a news conference Monday admitted the navigational error. They said the plane was farther north than intended because of a breakdown in the aircraft's navigational system. But spokesman Mark Anderson pointed out that the plane was still 200 miles from the Russian border when it changed course. He produced a

telex from Norwegian civilian air traffic controllers as proof the plane turned while still well away from the Soviet border. Norwegian military officials said the flight came within 50 N miles of Soviet airspace.

Chanin said the grounding has caused severe problems for the airline and the public, stranding many passengers and halting service across a large area of the South Pacific. In a message to FAA Administrator Donald Engen, American Samoa Gov. Coleman said American Samoa is 'totally dependent' on SPIA for transportation, medicine and mail from the rest of the United States. He asked the FAA to let SPIA resume service because without it a huge section of the South Pacific is isolated. In Washington, the Civil Aeronautics Board said it was trying to find another airline to fly the Honolulu to Pago Pago route during the interim.

The grounding was the second time in recent weeks that SPIA has run into difficulty with the FAA. Two days before the near-intrusion, the FAA imposed a 30-day suspension on the airline, citing operating violations.