

September 8, 1983

CPSU CC Politburo Session, Korean Air Flight 007

Citation:

"CPSU CC Politburo Session, Korean Air Flight 007", September 8, 1983, Wilson Center Digital Archive, TsKhSD. F. 89, Op. 42, D. 54, pp. 4. Translated by Gary Goldberg.
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/115559>

Summary:

Minutes from a Soviet Politburo meeting discussing the South Korean flight KAL 007 which was shot down by a Soviet interceptor on September 1, 1983.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Top Secret
Only copy
(Draft Minutes)

CPSU CC POLITBURO MEETING
8 September 1983

Chaired by Cde. K. U. CHERNENKO

Present were Cdes. M. S. Gorbachev, V. V. Grishin, N. A. Tikhonov, G. V. Romanov, D. F. Ustinov, V. I. Vorotnikov, V. I. Dolgikh, V. V. Kuznetsov, M. S. Solomentsev, I. V. Kapitonov, and K. V. Rusakov.

...13. Holding a press conference in connection with the incursion of the South Korean aircraft.

CHERNENKO. We have already decided the issue of holding a press conference for Soviet and foreign journalists in connection with the South Korean aircraft incident. Perhaps the comrades working on this issue will inform us of the state of affairs.

G. M. KORNIENKO (First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs). I can inform the Politburo that the working group formed of representatives of the MFA, Ministry of Defense, and the KGB meets every day, and prepares and submits appropriate suggestions for the consideration of the Politburo. Right now the main topic for us is preparations for a press conference which will be held at 3 P.M tomorrow.

USTINOV. I will speak of our assessment of the South Korean aircraft incident during the award to Sevastopol'.

CHERNENKO. That is good.

CHEBRIKOV. I want to report to the Politburo that there are 13 American and Japanese ships and 24 of our ships in the area where the aircraft went down. They are concentrated in three places. In addition, four American and five Soviet aircraft are operating there. An American ship is operating at the approach to this place right now to conduct deep-water operations.

It needs to be said that for provocative purposes the Americans have broadcast on the radio in Russian that Soviet aircraft will be shot down if they appear over the American ships operating [there]. This is, of course, an intentional provocation.

Inasmuch as the wind is blowing toward the Soviet coast the ocean has brought about 900 various fragments associated with the crash of the aircraft to the shore. There are no bodies yet.

Several new trends around the incident have been noted in American propaganda. First, the issue is constantly hyped that the aircraft was supposedly shot down not over Soviet territory but over neutral waters. This is a deliberate lie. Second, an uproar has been raised around demands for compensation to the families of those who were on the aircraft. Third, in one way or another questions have more and more often appeared in the American and Japanese press of why the American authorities are hushing up the fact that the South Korean plane was being tracked. Many

correspondents say plainly that nighttime, the weather conditions, and also the distance separating the aircraft from the Soviet fighters did not provide an opportunity to accurately determine its nationality. At the same time surprise is being expressed that neither the Americans nor the Japanese have issued any report about the activity of their [air] traffic control services.

TIKHONOV. Are we going to conduct deep-water work in the area that the aircraft went down?

USTINOV. The Ministry of the Fishing Industry has one ship adapted for deep-water work. We will try to use it.

CHEBRIKOV. The depth there turned out not to be 80-100 meters, as previously assumed, but 400-600 meters. It is quite difficult to work at that depth. Yes, and moreover this is neutral waters.

GORBACHEV. Has the issue been explored of how we are to act at the ICAO meeting?

CHEBRIKOV. ICAO does not have the right to discuss the issue of the aircraft incident.

TIKHONOV. However the Pilots Association has declared that it will not have any dealings with us for two months.

CHEBRIKOV. It has ended up in a quite difficult position. There are many foreign tourists in the Soviet Union right now. Who will take them out if they do not accept Aeroflot aircraft? At present only the US and Canada have begun sanctions against Aeroflot.

As regards our country our friends have the calmest and most correct attitude toward the incident. It needs to be noted that American and other foreign correspondents have tried to go around Moscow with tape recorders asking passersby how they feel about the South Korean aircraft incident. The responses were so vigorous and sharp that the correspondents very quickly left.

CHERNENKO. Now the main thing is to successfully hold the press conference. You have the resolution on this issue. Are there any objections to approving it?

POLITBURO MEMBERS. No, it can be approved.

The resolution is adopted.