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The South Korean Passenger Aircraft Incident (1983)

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Summary:

V.A. Martynov reviews Soviet archival sources on the shoot down of the Korean Air Lines Flight 007 in 1983.

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The South Korean Passenger Aircraft Incident (1983)

(Documentary Material)

[Translator's note: "049m/idu" appears at the bottom of each page]

On the morning of 1 September 1983 the mass media of a number of countries reported the disappearance in the Far East of a Boeing 747 passenger aircraft of the South Korean aviation company KAL carrying 269 passengers traveling on route [SIC] 007 from New York to Anchorage to Seoul.

On the same day at 0030 (local time) Assistant US Secretary of State [for European and Canadian Affairs] R. Burt called the Soviet Embassy in Washington and said that "as far as American tracking stations have been able to establish the aircraft might 'have accidentally violated Soviet airspace in this region' and made a forced landing there...The American [air traffic control] service has no other information about it at the present moment. South Korean authorities turned to the US with a request to find out from Soviet authorities what they know about the fate of the aircraft.

Burt raised two questions in this connection, asking that they be passed to Moscow:

- Do we know anything at all about this aircraft and its landing?

- If [anything] is known, might it have happened that the aircraft, accidentally entering Soviet airspace was forced to land on Soviet territory in the area of Sakhalin Island?...1.

1 AVP RF. f. 059, op. 78, p. 88, d. 275, pp. 185-186.

The same morning Undersecretary US Secretary of State [for Political Affairs] L. Eagleburger invited USSR chargé d'affaires O. M. Sokolov to the State Department and made an oral declaration to him in which he patiently described the American version of the flight details of the South Korean airliner. Its essence boiled down to "the South Korean civil airliner was deliberately attacked by a Soviet aircraft and that this led to the destruction of the South Korean airliner".

"In view of the information", said Eagleburger, "that the South Korean aircraft was destroyed by a Soviet aircraft it is extremely important that we immediately receive an explanation from the Soviet side about the circumstances of this incident.

It is obvious that such a serious incident might have broad international repercussions..."2.

2 Ibid. pp. 189-90.

A half-hour after Sokolov's meeting with Eagleburger the American version was publicly repeated at a briefing for journalists by US Secretary of State G. Shultz³.

3 Ibid. pp. 192-93

In Tokyo on the morning of 1 September Soviet Ambassador V. Ya. Pavlov was invited

to the Japanese MFA to see Ye. Kato, Director-General of the Department of European Countries and Oceania, who stated an urgent request from the Japanese side "to quickly investigate the facts and immediately inform" the Japanese government about the disappearance of the South Korean aircraft⁴.

⁴AVP RF. f. 059, op. 78, p. 283, d. 901, pp. 115-116.

On 1 September the Soviet embassies in Washington and Tokyo were given instructions to inform the US State Department and the MFA of Japan respectively of the following:

"On the night of 31 August - 1 September an aircraft of unknown nationality entered the airspace of the Soviet Union over the Kamchatka Peninsula from the direction of the Pacific Ocean and then violated Soviet airspace over Sakhalin Island for a second time. The aircraft flew without navigation lights while doing this, and did not respond or enter into communications with the air traffic control service.

The Air Defense fighters scrambled to meet the intruding aircraft to help guide it to the nearest airfield. However the intruding aircraft did not react to the signals given or the warnings of the Soviet fighters and continued the flight in the direction of the Sea of Japan.

We took steps to search for this aircraft in connection with the appeal of the American (Japanese) side. Signs of a possible aircraft crash were detected in the area of the island of Moneron as a result. Searches in this area continue¹.

¹ AVP RF. f. 029, op. 27, p. 14, d. 114. pp. 154-155.

On 2 September a TASS report with the identical content was published with the exception of the last paragraph²

²Pravda, 1983, 2 September.

The Soviet embassy in Tokyo reported that on 2 September 1983 the government of Japan "came to a final conclusion that the South Korean aircraft was shot down as a result of a missile attack by a Soviet fighter". At a meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers the decision was made to create an extraordinary council headed by the Prime Minister in parallel with the staff previously formed in the Japanese MFA to investigate the causes of the incident. It also includes the Secretary-General of the Cabinet, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Transportation, and the Chief of the Directorate of National Defense¹

¹ AVP RF. f. 059, op. 78, p. 283, d. 901, pp. 128-129.

On 3 September 1983 the following statement was made to V. Ya. Ivanov in the Japanese MFA by Minister S. Abe:

"As a result of an analysis of information, including radar data, the Japanese side has come to the conclusion that the passenger aircraft of the South Korean company KAL flying the New York-Anchorage-Seoul route was attacked by a Soviet fighter on the morning of 1 September and was shot down southwest of Sakhalin near the island of Moneron at 0338. The government of Japan thinks that such actions, whatever their cause, are absolutely impermissible with respect to civilian aircraft and must be vigorously condemned. In view of the fact that this incident involved the deaths of 269 people, including 28 Japanese citizens, the Japanese side demands immediate

and honest explanations from the Soviet side and that trustworthy information about what occurred be provided..."²

2 AVP RF. f. 0146, op. 84, p. 455, d. 4, p. 23.

During September representations were repeatedly made to the Soviet embassy in Tokyo about various issues connected with the incident³.

3 For example, *ibid.* f. 059, op. 78, p. 283, d. 901, pp. 152-155, 187-189, 244-247.

On 2 September the White House Press Secretary made the following statement in California on behalf of President Reagan: "The United States", it said, "is 'revolted' with respect to this horrifying act of violence" and "joins with other members of the international community in demanding a complete explanation for this appalling and wanton misdeed". Expressing the "deepest sympathy" to the families of the victims and promising to make "every effort to get to the bottom of this tragedy" he called for the flags of the United States in all federal institutions and American military bases throughout the entire world to be lowered¹. (US Congressman L. McDonald turned out to be among the victims of the incident).

1 AVP RF. f. 059, op. 78, p. 88, d. 275, pp. 203-204

On the same day before taking off for Washington from California Reagan personally made a statement in which, besides condemning the "barbaric act committed yesterday by the Soviet regime against a commercial jetliner" it spoke in general terms that "the Soviet Union is willing to advance its interests through violence and intimidation", about the "stark contrast that exists between Soviet words and deeds", the impossibility of trusting a country which "so broadly trumpets its vision of peace and global disarmament and yet so callously and quickly commits a terrorist act to sacrifice the lives of so many innocent human beings..."².

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 226-227.

In a 2 September 1983 a TASS Statement published on 3 September 1983 it stated that "on the night of 31 August - 1 September an aircraft of unidentified nationality violated the Soviet border and deeply intruded into the airspace of the Soviet Union. The intruding aircraft deviated from the international air route in the direction of Soviet territory by up to 500 km and was over the Kamchatka Peninsula, the region of the Sea of Okhotsk, and the Sakhalin Island for more than two hours.

In violation of international rules the aircraft flew without navigation lights, did not react to the radio signals of the Soviet air traffic control services, and made no attempts to establish such communications itself".

During the time the unknown intruding aircraft was in Soviet airspace, it then said in the Statement, "Soviet aircraft...repeatedly tried to establish contact with it with the aid of commonly-used signals and guide it to the nearest airfield on Soviet territory. However the intruding aircraft ignored all this. Soviet aircraft gave warning shots with tracer rounds along its course of travel over Sakhalin island.

Soon after this the intruding aircraft exited Soviet airspace and continued to fly in the direction of the Sea of Japan. For approximately 10 minutes it was in the surveillance zone of radar equipment, after which observation was lost".

In connection with the "uproar around the disappearance of the South Korean aircraft

which was flying from New York to Seoul raised in the US and some other countries" the Statement said that "the information coming from the United States gives increasing reason to think that the route and nature of the flight was not coincidental" and directed attention to the fact that "reference was made to the US Central Intelligence Agency back in the first report about this (in the US - V. M.)"; the reaction to the incident by American authorities was described as "dirty insinuations against the USSR" and "the incursion" itself "of this aircraft into the airspace" was assessed as a "a planned act" and the accomplishment of special intelligence objectives "under the cover of civilian aircraft".

The conclusion was drawn that "those who organized this provocation have deliberately further aggravated the international situation, trying to defame the Soviet Union, to sow a feeling of hatred toward it, and to cast aspersions on the peaceloving Soviet policy".

President Reagan's speech (see page 5) directed against the Soviet Union in connection with the incident was called "shameless" and "slanderous".

TASS was authorized to declare that "regret is being expressed in the leading circles of the United States in connection with the loss of life and at the same time they vigorously condemn those who deliberately or as a result of criminal neglect permitted the deaths of people, and now are trying to use what happened for unscrupulous political purposes"¹.

¹ Pravda, 1983, 3 September.

The Soviet embassy in Washington was given instructions to send the text of the Statement to US Secretary of State G. Shultz or his deputy verbatim, with the exception of the assessment of Reagan's speech, and to add the following paragraph:

"It should be clear to the US government that for it to continue a policy of furthering tension in Soviet-American relations and in the world as a whole would neither be in accord with the interests of our two countries nor to a solution of the large problems which actually exist"².

² AVP RF, f. 029, op. 27, p. 14, d. 114, pp. 161-163.

The leaders of the GDR, Hungary, Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Cuba, Mongolia, and Vietnam have been informed of the content of the representation to the US government.

In addition to this information, the governments of Japan and Canada were also informed that "the Soviet side is conducting searches in the presumed area the aircraft fell and the Japanese (Canadian) side will be informed of the results"¹.

¹ AVP RF, f. 029, op. 27, p. 14, d. 114, p. 163.

In connection with the fact that the governments of several countries have let it be known that they expect "more official" statements from the Soviet side, including an expression of regret about what occurred, on 5 October 1983 all Soviet ambassadors, Soviet representatives, and Soviet general consuls were given instructions "to explain that the official position of the Soviet government was described in the above TASS statement". At the same time [attention is to be directed] to the fact that the Statement "plainly says that the Soviet government expresses regret in connection with the lives lost" and moreover contains "a vigorous condemnation of those who deliberately or as a result of criminal neglect permitted the deaths of people and are

now trying to use what happened for unscrupulous political purposes"².

² Ibid. p. 137.

At 8 P.M. on 5 September President Reagan spoke on American television from the White House, addressing the nation in connection with the South Korean aircraft incident and the American "steps in response" against the USSR.

Among other things Reagan stated that the USSR committed "a crime against humanity", grossly violating "every concept of human rights", that "its actions have no justification, either legal or moral "...

The US President "cited the American version of what happened to the South Korean aircraft" and "tried to justify acts of espionage conducted by American reconnaissance aircraft near the Soviet Union"¹.

¹ AVP RF, f. 059, op. 78, p. 89, d. 276, p. 50

In a "position paper [fakticheskaya spravka]" widely distributed simultaneously with the President's speech a list of "steps in response" was briefly described with some clarifications and explanations in comparison with the text of Reagan's speech.

As regards diplomatic efforts, the paper said that "the US in cooperation with other countries will continue to insist that the Soviet side provide 'a full accounting of what transpired, apologies, a recognition of responsibility, and appropriate punishment of the guilty'"; "the State Department continues to consult with our allies and friends"; the US together with Japan will seek permission from the Soviet Union "to obtain immediate access to the remains of the wreckage or the bodies of the deceased which have been found"; during a UN Security Council meeting on 6 September Ambassador Kilpatrick will make public a complete transcript of the conversations of the Soviet pilots about how they shot down the Korean aircraft".

In the area of bilateral relations "halting talks on a number of bilateral agreements" and "refusing to extend a bilateral agreement about cooperation in the field of transportation" were contemplated.

Regarding ensuring the safety of air transportation the American side turned to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) with a request to conduct an investigation of the Soviet Union's actions at a special meeting of the ICAO Council; in order "to isolate Aeroflot internationally" the US administration intended to attempt "to support international non-governmental organizations in order to limit ground support activity for Aeroflot flights" and also to oppose talks unrelated to issues of ensuring safety which are being held between Aeroflot and other national civil aviation organizations".

And, finally, the US intended [Translator's note: several words lost through a reproduction error] dead American citizens also of those whose private interests were affected through diplomatic channels..."¹

¹ AVP RF, f. 059, op. 78, p. 89, d. 276, pp. 55-57.

On 6 September 1983 a Soviet government Statement was broadcasted on radio and television and published in the press on 7 September in which it said in particular that the investigation held after the TASS statement published on 2 September "with the authorization of the Soviet government confirmed previously cited information and

added that the Air Defense command of the region had carefully analyzed the actions of the intruding aircraft and its route, which passed in the area of Sakhalin over military bases, and had finally come to the conclusion that a reconnaissance aircraft was performing special missions in Soviet airspace. The fact that this aircraft was following a course over strategically important regions of the Soviet Union also led us to this". After "the intruding aircraft did not heed the demand to proceed to a Soviet airfield and tried to leave, the Air Defense interceptor carried out the order of the command post to halt the flight...

The Soviet pilots who halted the activity of the intruding aircraft could not have known that it was a civilian aircraft. It was traveling without navigation lights in the middle of the night in conditions of poor visibility and did not response to the signals given. The statements of the US President that the Soviet pilots supposedly knew that it was a civilian aircraft are absolutely not true".

The Statement drew the conclusion that this was "an intentional, previously planned act in a region of strategic importance to the Soviet Union. Its organizers could not have failed to understand how this might end but proceeded to carry out a large intelligence operation with the use, as is now clear, of a civilian aircraft, consciously subjecting its passengers to mortal danger....The calculation was made that this intelligence operation could be carried out without hindrance and if it were halted this could all be turned into a large-scale political provocation directed against the Soviet Union.

Such a conclusion is confirmed by all the subsequent actions of the US administration. Its leaders, including the President of the United States personally, unleashed a maliciously hostile anti-Soviet campaign in an extremely short time, clearly in accordance with a previously prepared scenario. Its essence was revealed in the most concentrated form in US President R. Reagan's 5 September speech on American television: to attempt to defame the Soviet Union and its social system, to provoke a feeling of hatred toward the Soviet people, to present the goals of Soviet foreign policy in a distorted manner, to distract attention from its many initiatives...Judging from everything, including the aforementioned speech of the American president, the US administration is intent on following a path of further exacerbation of a confrontation with the Soviet Union".

It said in conclusion: "The Soviet government expresses condolences concerning the deaths of innocent people and shares the grief of their relatives and friends. The leaders of the United States of America bear entire responsibility for the tragedy which occurred"¹.

¹ Pravda, 1983, 7 September.

All Soviet ambassadors, Soviet representatives, and Soviet general consuls have been given instructions to "officially pass the text of the Statement to the government of the host country in conformance, of course, with the conditions of the host country. Where possible, distribute it in the mass media" and also pursue "active work in political and social circles and also among the diplomatic corps and representatives of the press" on the basis of this Statement².

² AVP RF, f. 029, op. 27, p. 14, d. 114, p. 153.

When passing the text the Soviet embassy in Washington was ordered to accompany it with a verbal statement in which it stated that "the facts cited in the Statement of the Soviet government published on 6 September clearly say that the incursion of the South Korean aircraft into Soviet airspace in the Far East which occurred on the night of 31 August - 1 September was organized by American special services. This is

confirmed by other information which we have, but we do not intend to make it public for reasons of secrecy.

There is no doubt that this was a large intelligence operation undertaken in a strategically important region of the Soviet Union using an aircraft specially equipped for these purposes with passengers on board...

Irrespective of whether they knew of each such act beforehand, the US leadership bears full responsibility for such a barbaric practice and its tragic consequences.

As regards this case, the entire course of succeeding events leaves no room for doubt that the American special services have acted with the knowledge and approval of higher authorities".

A number of specific questions were then raised about the flight route, the actions of the crew and the American and Japanese air [traffic control] services, and concluded: "Instead of engaging in a search for replies to all these and many other questions and finding those guilty of such 'peculiarities' which had led to tragic consequences, the leaders of the US, including the President personally, instantly made completely shameless insinuations against the Soviet Union unworthy of government leaders, trying to slander it in the eyes of world public opinion.

... vigorously rejecting with indignation the attempts by the US government to shun responsibility for the deaths of the people who were flying on the South Korean aircraft and to shift it on the Soviet Union, the Soviet side warns the American side about the dangerous consequences of the United States continuing their present irresponsible policy with respect to the USSR and in international affairs as a whole"¹.

¹ AVP RF, f. 029, op. 27, p. 14, d. 114, pp. 167-169.

(O. M. Sokolov sent acting Secretary of State J. Kelly the text of the Statement on the evening of 6 September and the additional instruction on 8 September 1983)¹.

¹ AVP RF, f. 059, op. 78, p. 89, d. 276, p. 95.

On 7 September 1983 USSR Minister of Foreign Affairs A. A. Gromyko, speaking at a meeting of CSCE member countries in Madrid, declared: "It is well known that this incident is being deliberately exploited by certain circles of the United States to aggravate the international situation. They have raised a wave of slander and dishonest insinuations against the USSR and the countries of socialism.

We vigorously and indignantly deny all this. The main issue which arises is whether there is a right to violate someone else's borders and the sovereignty of another country without punishment. No, no one has such a right. This important provision is established in the most authoritative documents, and in the UN Charter.

As has completely become clear the American authorities and their special services were keeping special track of the South Korean aircraft. It intruded into Soviet airspace...and was in it for a long time and flew over our strategic military facilities.

Why and how did it end up there? They persistently try to avoid answering this legitimate question...

We declare that Soviet territory and the borders of the Soviet Union are sacred.

Whoever resorts to these kinds of provocation should know that they will bear all responsibility for it.

They will not be able to justify this criminal act, either through any dishonest juggling of the facts or through false versions presented in the form of a concern for human rights no matter on what level they do this...". The entire incident was characterized as "a huge provocation used by its organizers in the interests of their militarist policy and fomenting a military psychosis"¹.

1 Pravda, 1983, 8 September.

On 9 September the USSR Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs held a press conference for Soviet and foreign journalists in which N. V. Ogarkov, Chief the General Staff of the Armed Forces, G. M. Korniyenko, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, and L. M. Zamyatin, Chief of the CPSU CC Department of International Information participated.

In his opening remarks N. V. Ogarkov said that "understanding the entire importance of what happened, the Soviet government created a special highly authoritative [vysokokompetentnaya] state commission on the same day. It included senior specialists and experts from various ministries, including Gosavianadzor [the State Aviation Inspectorate].

It has been irrefutably proven that the incursion of the aircraft of the South Korean company into Soviet airspace was an intentional, carefully planned intelligence operation. It was directed from certain centers on US territory and Japan. A civilian aircraft was deliberately chosen without considering, but possibly also counting on, a loss of life".

The organizers of the press conference presented factual information about the individual stages of the flight and answered questions put to them².

2 Ibid., 10 September.

Materials both of a propaganda as well as a special professional nature about various aspects of the Boeing 747 incident were subsequently published in the Soviet press.

The Sanctions Against Aeroflot

The governments of a number of countries - Britain, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Canada, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the FRG, Switzerland, and Japan - announced a halt to air service with the USSR for a period of from two weeks to two months in connection with the South Korean aircraft incident.

Among countries which did not have agreements with the Soviet Union about air service Iceland prohibited the landing of Aeroflot aircraft at its airports and overflight rights for two weeks, and Australia and New Zealand introduced a ban on commercial ties of their air carriers for up to 60 days and adopted a number of other discriminatory measures with respect to Soviet citizens.

For example, the measures adopted by the government of Japan came down to the following.

On 9 September 1983 the Soviet embassy reported that on the same day it was announced that Japan would refrain "for some time...from giving permission for

Aeroflot aircraft to perform non-scheduled (charter) flights"; it will refuse "to consider requests from the Soviet side to increase the number of regular flights and [to consider] changes in the type of aircraft used"; officials of government institutions and local authorities were prohibited from and it was recommended that all other Japanese subjects "refrain from using the services of Aeroflot".

Speaking at a meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers at which this decision was adopted Prime Minister Ya. Nakasone said that "it was desirable to avoid this incident influencing the main areas of Japanese-Soviet relations"¹.

¹ AVP RF. f. 059, op. 78, p. 283, d. 901, pp. 218-219.

(On 13 September Ye. Kato informed the Soviet ambassador about "additional measures" against the Soviet Union:

1. From 0015 15 September to 2400 28 September flights of all Soviet aircraft in Japanese airspace or landings on Japanese territory are prohibited.
2. During this time flights by Japanese aircraft into Soviet airspace and their landing on Soviet territory are not permitted).²

² AVP RF. f. 059, op. 78, p. 283, d. 902, pp. 6-7.

On 8 September 1983 acting US Secretary of State Eagleburger invited Soviet Ambassador A. F. Dobrynin to the State Department and in addition to the earlier announced "steps in response", officially declared a decision of the American authorities "not to permit the Soviet company Aeroflot have its offices in the United States any longer. The State Department asks the Soviet embassy to ensure that Aeroflot offices in New York and Washington cease all their activity no later than 15 September 1983 inclusively and that all Soviet citizens who were admitted to the United States to work as officials or employees of Aeroflot and also all their dependents and other persons accompanying them leave the United States no later than 15 September 1983 inclusively"

Referring to Article 12 of the air service agreement between the US government and the Soviet government of 4 November 1966 the United States also "thinks that in accordance with the aforementioned article the Soviet Union does not have the right to have Aeroflot offices in the United States at the present time "¹.

¹ AVP RF, f. 059, op. 78, p. 89, d. 276, pp. 102-104.

On the afternoon of the same day, 8 September, the White House announced that Reagan had given instructions to the Federal Aviation Administration to introduce the following prohibitions effective 12 September:

- halt Aeroflot's right to sell tickets to the US;
- forbid American carriers from selling tickets to the US on Aeroflot flights;
- prohibit American air carriers from performing shipments on tickets which include flights on Aeroflot aircraft;
- instruct American aviation carriers to suspend the operation of any international contracts with Aeroflot; and

- forbid American aviation carriers from accepting any tickets issued by Aeroflot for flights to the US, from the US, and inside the country".

This same White House announcement spoke of a decision by American authorities to demand the closure of Aeroflot offices in the US and the departure of their personnel from the country by 15 September².

² Ibid., pp. 104-105.

A CPSU CC resolution was adopted in connection with the aforementioned announced sanctions against Aeroflot in accordance with which all the countries listed were given a representation with a "fundamental assessment of their positions", a protest lodged, and they were charged with "all responsibility for the consequences of the illegal actions which they have undertaken". It was also announced to all the countries which violated an agreement that "we reserve the right to make claims against them for damages"³. The representations were made verbally to representatives of the corresponding countries in Moscow and differentiated "with allowance for the specific position taken by the individual country and the nature of relations with it".

³ AVP RF, f. 029, op. 27, d. [SIC] 14, d. 114, pp. 183, 186-190.

For example, it was announced to the Japanese government that "ties in the area of air service are one of the primary components of the entire complex of relations between the USSR and Japan" and that "the statements by Japanese officials about the undesirability of the negative influence 'of the above measures on relations between the two countries sound strange at the least"¹. [Translator's note: SIC, no close quote for the cited Japanese government statement].

¹ AVP RF, f. 029, op. 27, d. [SIC]14, d. 114, p. 187; f. 059, op. 78, p. 281, d. 891, pp. 44-45.

Consideration of the Issue in the UN Security Council and General Assembly

At its 2470th meeting on 2 September 1983 without objection the Security Council included on the agenda consideration of the 1 September 1983 letters to the Chairman of the Security Council from the acting Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations (s/15947), the Permanent Observer of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations (s/15948), the chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations (s/15949), the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations (s/15950), and the Acting Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations (s/15951)¹, in which the actions of the Soviet Union in the South Korean aircraft incident were described as a violation of the norms and practices of international civil aviation and international law².

¹ Security Council Report, 16 June 1983 - 15 June 1984. General Assembly, official reports, 39th Session, supplement N^o 2 (A/139/2), p. 49.

² Security Council Report, 16 June 1983 - 15 June 1984. General Assembly, official reports, 38th Session, supplement for July, August, and September 1983, pp. 76, 77.

In connection with the US proposal to raise the issue of the loss of the South Korean aircraft for discussion at the UN Security Council, on 2 September 1983 the Soviet Mission to the UN was ordered:

1. To categorically object to convening the Council to discuss this issue "because it has no relation to issues affecting international peace and security".

2. In the event "that it is not possible to avoid placing this issue before the Council" "state our fundamental position, guided by the TASS Statement of 2 September and the instructions to the Soviet ambassador in Washington".

In addition, instructions were given to work "towards wrapping up the discussion of this issue as fast as possible", and in any event not permitting "the Council to adopt a resolution capable of casting aspersions on us in any way", using a veto if necessary¹.

¹ AVP RF, f. 029, op. 27, p. 14, d. 114, p. 164.

On 5 September it was suggested to the Soviet UN Mission that in the event "at the (Security Council - A. M.) meeting the American side tries to exhibit any factual materials, in particular recordings of supposedly intercepted conversations of the pilots of the Soviet interceptors", "not to get involved in the discussion of the authenticity or inauthenticity of any radio intercepts" and declare that "the presentation of any such sort of fabricated material is a deliberate attempt to direct the discussion on a wrong path and avoid answering the main question, how and for what purpose did the aircraft end up so far from the international flight path it should have been traveling on...The factual aspect of the matter, what it is in reality, and not how someone is trying to present it in a distorted manner, will show with all certainty who bears responsibility for what happened to the South Korean aircraft."¹

¹ AVP RF, f. 029, op. 27, p. 14, d. 114, pp. 140-142.

At the 2474th meeting on 8 September the representative of the Netherlands introduced draft resolution S/15966 whose authors were Australia, Canada, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Fiji, France, and Japan, according to which the Security Council

1. expressed "deep regret regarding the destruction of the South Korean airliner and the consequent tragic loss of civilians";

2. declared that "such use of armed force against international civil aviation is incompatible with the norms regulating international behavior and elementary considerations of humanity";

3. insistently calls upon "all countries to observe the goals and missions of the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation";

4. welcomed "the decision to convene an urgent meeting of the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization to examine the Korean [SIC] airliner incident";

5. insistently called upon "all countries to completely cooperate with the International Civil Aviation Organization in efforts to strengthen the safety of international civil aviation and avoid any repetition of such a use of armed force against international civil aviation";

6. suggested the Secretary-General "conduct a thorough investigation of the circumstances of this tragedy"; and

7. "...submit a report of the results he obtained to the Security Council within 14 days..."¹.

1 Security Council Report, 16 June 1983 - 15 June 1984. General Assembly, official reports, 39th Session, supplement N° 2 (A/139/2), pp. 51-52.

At the 2476th meeting on 12 September 1983 nine votes were in favor of the resolution (s/15966, revision 1) (Zaire, Jordan, Malta, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Togo, and France), two were against (Poland and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), and four abstained (Guyana, Zimbabwe, China, and Nicaragua), and it was not adopted inasmuch as one of the permanent members had voted against it².

2 Ibid, p. 54.

In the atmosphere of the anti-Soviet campaign in the US over the South Korean aircraft incident the Soviet leadership decided not to send Minister of Foreign Affairs A. A. Gromyko to head the Soviet delegation to the 38th UNGA session and the American side was informed of this on 18 September in a conversation between Assistant Secretary of State R. Burt and Soviet Ambassador to the US A. F. Dobrynin. According to the Ambassador's report, Burt seemed "flabbergasted" at this decision and described it as "an overreaction"³.

3 AVP RF, f. 059, op. 78, p. 89, d. 277, pp. 151-152.

(Two days previously, on 16 September 1983, R. Burt informed O. M. Sokolov that the US government would be prepared to permit the flight of a Soviet special aircraft to New York on 18 September on condition that it would not be an Aeroflot aircraft but a Soviet military aircraft. Its arrival and servicing at one of the military airfields near New York was assured¹.

1 AVP RF, f. 059, op. 78, p. 89, d. 277, pp. 106-107.

The same day Burt called the embassy again and passed O. M. Sokolov an "official message" of the US government which stated that it did not think that "the reasons why the decision about the impossibility of Mr. A. A. Gromyko coming to New York for the UN General Assembly session was made were satisfactorily explained to it", that it also does not think that "the US government is obstructing his arrival, and it is ready to take appropriate steps both to ensure the safety of Mr. A. A. Gromyko and the arrival of his aircraft"².

2 Ibid. pp. 161-162.

At the session on the very day of the opening of general discussion on 26 September 1983 President Reagan declared that "reactions to the Korean airliner tragedy are a timely reminder of just how different the Soviets' concept of truth and international cooperation is from that of the rest of the world..."³ On 28 September 1983 Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs S. Abe called the incident "an intolerable challenge to humanity and international law. The Soviet Union not only has not presented Japan and other interested countries with any satisfactory explanation for these facts but has even tried to shift the blame onto others". Abe called upon the Soviet Union "to immediately respond to the condemnation of this lawless act by the international community and to properly admit its responsibility...."⁴.

3 Official reports of the General Assembly, 38th Session, plenary meetings, Vol. I (stenographic reports of the 1st-33rd sessions), United Nations, New York, 1989, p.

37.

4 Official reports of the General Assembly, 38th Session, plenary meetings, Vol. I (stenographic reports of the 1st-33rd sessions), United Nations, New York, 1989, p. 121.

The representatives of many countries, especially the developing countries, were considerably more restrained in [their] assessments and, like Sierra Leone President S. Stevens, limited themselves to an expression "of a feeling of deep regret" about the "political atmosphere and psychological climate" which gave rise to "this regrettable incident"¹.

1 Ibid. p. 253.

During the work of the 38th UNGA session, on 23 September Yu. V. Andropov, CPSU CC General Secretary and Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, made a statement of a fundamental nature about the international situation.

He characterized the policy being pursued by the United States in international affairs as militaristic and "presenting a serious threat to peace. Its essence is to try to provide the US with a dominant position in the world without considering the interests of other countries and peoples.

...the sophisticated provocation organized by the special services of the United States using the South Korean aircraft is also an example of extreme adventurism in politics. We have described the factual aspect of this act truthfully and in detail. The guilt of its organizers - however much they may try to avoid it, whatever false versions they have advanced - has been proven."

This "unprecedented criminal diversion", it said in the Statement "is on the consciences of those who would like to arrogate themselves the right not to take into consideration the sovereignty of countries and the inviolability of their borders, [those] who thought up and carried out this provocation, and [those] who literally the next day hastened to push colossal military appropriations through Congress, and now rub their hands with glee...The 'humanism' of the leaders who try to shift the blame onto others for the deaths of the people who were on the aircraft is moving new mountains of weapons of mass destruction, from MX missiles to containers of paralytic nerve gas¹.

1 Pravda, 1983, 29 September.

The speech of O. A. Troyanovsky, Permanent Representative of the USSR to the UN and deputy chief of the Soviet delegation (in the absence of A. A. Gromyko), was also in the spirit of Yu. V. Andropov's Statement².

2 Pravda, 1983, 6 October.

After the conclusion of the 38th UNGA session the propaganda tension around the incident, primarily from the American side, lessened considerably. In the process of exchanging opinions on a wide range of international and bilateral relations during A. A. Gromyko's 18 January 1984 meeting in Stockholm with G. Shultz the US Secretary of State touched on this issue only in the context of the need to create "an international air corridor in the Far East where the South Korean aircraft was recently lost. This question is being discussed in ICAO (the International Civil Aviation Organization) right now. There is a need to equip this route appropriately, particularly with radio beacons, and to come to an agreement about setting up communications

between air traffic control services. [There is a need] to do this in general so that flights on this airway [na etoy linii] become safe"¹.

¹ AVP RF, f. 029, op. 28, p. 1, d. 3, pp. 154-155.

The Soviet Minister said in response: "About ICAO. The question you raised is being considered in this organization right now. Your representatives and ours are there. Let them try and work out a mutually acceptable position...This can be done if they are not just guided by the desire to oppose the position of the other side even if it is right..."².

² Ibid. p. 163.

Discussion of the Incident in ICAO

On 16 September 1983 a resolution proposed by Australia, Britain, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Canada, the Netherlands, the US, the FRG, France, and Japan was adopted at an extraordinary ICAO Council meeting in Montreal which recognized that "such use of armed force against international civil aviation is incompatible with the norms governing international behavior and elementary considerations of humanity and also with the rules, standards, and recommended practices enshrined in the Chicago Convention and the amendments to it, and entail generally acknowledged legal consequences"; the principle was confirmed according to which "when intercepting civilian aircraft governments ought not use weapons against them"; concern was expressed that "the Soviet Union does not yet acknowledge the enormous danger to ensuring the safety and preservation of the lives of passengers and crew members when there is a question of civilian aircraft being intercepted in or near its territorial airspace"; it was stressed that "these actions present a serious threat to the safety of international civil aviation". It was proposed that the Secretary-General begin an investigation to ascertain the facts and technical aspects relating to this flight and the destruction of the aircraft and present a preliminary report to the Council within 30 days and a full report during the 110th Council session¹.

¹ AVP RF, f. 059, op. 78, p. 205, d. 651, pp. 95-96.

The representatives of the USSR and Czechoslovakia voted against this resolution and Algeria, the PRC, and India abstained. The representatives of Iraq and Lebanon did not participate in the work of the Council².

² Ibid, p. 93.

In connection with unfavorable outcome for the USSR of the discussion of the issue of the South Korean aircraft in the ICAO Council at the 24th ICAO Assembly session held from 20 September to 10 October 1983, on 19 September the Soviet delegation was sent the following directives in addition to the ones it already had:

"1. Vigorously object to and vote against decisions adopted by the Assembly directed at condemning the Soviet Union and placing responsibility on it in connection with the termination of the flight of the South Korean aircraft which intruded into Soviet airspace...

2. Categorically reject proposals to conduct any investigation through ICAO channels, including technical aspects of the aircraft incident, and declare that the Soviet side has sufficient ability to conduct the necessary investigation" and also that "when the investigation is concluded the Soviet side is ready to inform ICAO of its results.

3. Propose an initiative to draw up clear rules developing and specifying the existing general provisions of the Chicago Convention right at the Assembly session or, at its instruction, by the ICAO Council...about the impermissibility of misusing civil aviation and its use for any purposes incompatible with the goals of this Convention...

4. Suggest developing rules within the ICAO framework specifying the responsibilities of countries, their air traffic control bodies, airlines, and aircraft crews for preventing violations of the airspace of foreign countries and establishing flight conditions in them...

9. Do not object to consideration of the issue of the non-use of weapons against intercepted civilian aircraft without any reference to the South Korean aircraft incident or close linkage with the development of the measures we have proposed (points three through seven of this directive) aimed at prohibiting the use of civilian aircraft for illegal purposes and at averting violations of the airspace of foreign countries. Stress that otherwise, that is, apart from the measures which we have proposed, the adoption of a proposal concerning an obligatory prohibition against the use of weapons against civilian aircraft would mean the actual sanctioning of the use of civilian aircraft for intelligence and other illegal purposes, which ought to be absolutely excluded"1.

1 AVP RF, f. 029, op. 27, p. 14, p. 114, pp. 180-182.

The 16 September 1983 decision of the ICAO Council was approved by the resolution of the ICAO Assembly adopted at the 1 October 1983 plenary meeting of the 24th session of the Assembly.

Sixty-five countries voted in favor of the resolution and the USSR, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Vietnam, Romania, Cuba, Afghanistan, and The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen voted against it. Twenty-six delegations abstained1.

1 AVP RF, f. 029, op. 27, p. 14, d. 114, p. 202.

At the invitation of the Soviet Committee for ICAO Affairs ICAO Secretary General Y. Lambert was in the USSR from 11 to 17 November 1983. During his visit, among other things, the Commission to Investigate the Circumstances of the South Korean Aircraft's Violation of Soviet Airspace familiarized him with the progress of the investigation being conducted by the Soviet side and materials related to it.

The delivery of an official document of the Investigation Commission to the ICAO General Secretary with a description of the substance of the provocative flight and the conclusion about its intelligence nature should have, according to a 16 November 1983 CPSU CC resolution, stressed "our fundamental position according to which the investigation of this aviation incident should be made by the Soviet Union, in accordance with the provisions of the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation, and not by ICAO".

The ICAO General Secretary was also informed that "the conclusion of the investigation is being obstructed by a lack of necessary information which is being sought by the Soviet side via the Soviet MFA from the governments of the US, Japan, South Korea (through the US, which represents its interests), and the ICAO Secretariat "1.

1 AVP RF, f. 029, op. 27, p. 14, d. 114, p. 202.

On 18 November 1983 Y. Lambert informed the ICAO Council in detail of his trip to

the USSR².

2 AVP RF, f. 059, op. 78, p. 205, d. 651, p. 246.

On 6 December 1983 the final report of the General Secretary of the Organization concerning the investigation of the South Korean aircraft incident was distributed to representatives in the ICAO Council including, among other things, preliminary information about the progress of the investigation of the incident submitted by the USSR. As the Soviet mission to ICAO reported, the report lacked "a direct and clearly expressed indication that the South Korean aircraft violated the airspace and sovereignty of the USSR, as a result of which it was shot down as a reconnaissance aircraft", although it was mentioned "in passing" and "much attention was devoted to an attempt to prove that the crew made a mistake in the course and deviated from the assigned flight path and also that the crew did not suspect that it was being intercepted. An interpretation [rasshifrovka] of the radio transmissions of the Soviet interceptors by American special services was cited in a supplement".

At the same time it was reported that "the general reaction of the representatives in the Council to the content of the report was calm. No anti-Soviet attacks have been observed to date. This was facilitated to a considerable degree by the Secretary General's visit to the USSR...and the delivery to the ICAO Secretary General of preliminary information about the progress of the investigation being conducted by the Soviet Commission"¹.

1 AVP RF, f. 059, op. 78, p. 205, p. 651, pp. 253-254.

The ICAO Secretary General's report and the question of the South Korean aircraft incident as a whole were examined at an ICAO Council session in March 1984. In the course of the discussion "in their speeches the Soviet delegation and also the representatives of Czechoslovakia, Nigeria, Kenya, and Argentina noted the unproven nature of the materials and conclusions of the ICAO Secretary General's report and the impossibility of making a Council decision based on it. The Soviet delegation stressed that the factual materials submitted by the Soviet side demonstrating that the incursion of the South Korean aircraft into Soviet airspace was premeditated and done for provocative intelligence purposes were completely ignored in the report"¹.

1 AVP RF, f. 059, op. 79, p. 204, p. 660, pp. 93-94.

Nevertheless, 20 Council members voted for the point of the resolution proposed by the US and two [voted] against (the USSR and Czechoslovakia). Nine abstained and Iraq and Tanzania did not participate in the work of the session².

2 Ibid, p. 96.

The resolution stressed that "such use of armed force presents a serious threat to the safety of international civil aviation, is a violation of international law, and is incompatible with the rules stipulated in the Chicago Convention and the amendments to it, standards and recommended practices, and also with elementary considerations of humanity..."³

3 Ibid, p. 66.

In addition, as the Soviet delegation reported to Moscow, it "managed to avoid the inclusion in the text of the resolution several provisions which the US had insisted upon adopting at the start of the Council session, in particular the payment of compensation by the Soviet side in connection with the South Korean aircraft

incident, that the Soviet Union accept its responsibility for the incident..." The initially proposed wording about "Soviet actions to destroy the aircraft" was also not included in the resolution.

4 Ibid, p. 96.

In the assessment of ICAO Council President A. Kotaite which he made on 7 March 1984 in a conversation with B. A. Ryzhenkov, Executive Secretary of the Soviet Commission for ICAO Affairs and head of the Soviet delegation at the session, "the Soviet delegation managed to convince a considerable number of the representatives of developing countries that the statement of the Soviet side about the premeditated nature of the incursion of the South Korean aircraft into Soviet airspace has a certain foundation...The majority of the representatives of developing countries did not support the draft resolution proposed by the US...In his (Kokaite's) opinion, the examination of the South Korean aircraft incident in ICAO could be considered closed if no additional information is presented to ICAO..."¹

1 AVP RF, f. 059, op. 79, p. 204, d. 660, p. 101.

The Issue of Compensation and of Delivery of Information about the Incident

In the period following the incident a number of countries (the US, Britain, Canada, and others) made attempts to deliver or mail notes to either the Soviet embassies in these countries or to the Soviet MFA in which claims were made against the Soviet Union and demands submitted for material compensation to the relatives of the deceased.

For example, on 12 September 1983 Acting US Undersecretary of State Kelly invited Minister-Counselor O. M. Sokolov to the State Department and read a note in which it stated that the USSR "bears full responsibility" for what occurred, that it had "committed a gross and unjustifiable violation of international law" and that the US government "demands [trebuetsya]" that the Soviet Union pay "appropriate compensation" to the relatives of the deceased American passengers.

At the same time Kelly tried to deliver one more State Department note about the same issue, "on behalf of and at the request of" the government of the Republic of Korea.

Neither note was accepted¹.

1 AVP RF, f.059, op. 78, p. 89, d. 276, pp. 194-195; f. 192, op. 73, p. 473, d. 4, pp. 25-26.

On 14 September Ye. Kato, Director-General of the European and Asian Countries Department, demanded through the Soviet ambassador that the Soviet government, in addition to offering official apologies about the incident and promising to take steps to prohibit a repetition of such incidents in the future, "immediately and properly" offer compensation for "all the damage caused to the passengers of Japanese nationality and their property"².

2 AVP RF, f. 0146, op. 84, p. 455, d.4, p. 38.

Similar requests have also come from other countries.

Inasmuch as the fact itself of accepting them could be taken as indirect acceptance of

claims of this sort, on 13 September 1983 all Soviet missions abroad were given instructions not to accept notes and requests with claims and demands for payment of material compensation and to immediately return to the sender those received by mail.

When doing this it should be explained that "our fundamental position about this issue was exhaustively described in the 6 September Soviet government Statement which was delivered to the appropriate governments, and that any claims against us are completely and totally unfounded"³.

3 AVP RF, f.029, op. 27, p. 14, d. 114, p. 177.

From the very first days after the incident the American and Japanese sides have raised, and periodically escalated, the issue of sending them information about the progress and the results of search operations in the region where the Boeing 747 fell in the northeast part of the Sea of Japan. The first such information and several objects and documents which were found were transferred to the Japanese and Americans on 26 September 1983 in the port of Nevelsk on the island of Sakhalin in accordance with a previous agreement. On the same day Acting US Undersecretary of State J. Kelly delivered a State Department note to Soviet Minister O. M. Sokolov of the Soviet embassy in Washington which said that "the State Department...thinks that the Soviet Union is obligated to immediately send any wreckage and other materials concerning the South Korean company's aircraft for custody and control by the Republic of Korea, the United States, or Japan...

The State Department remarked that as the country in which the aircraft was registered and as its owner, and also as the country of which many of the passengers and crew members were citizens, the Republic of Korea has an indisputable right to participate in the transfer procedure in Nevelsk. The United States vigorously protests the Soviet Union's refusal to permit such participation...

In light of the clearly expressed designation of the United States and Japan as the only countries authorized by the government of the Republic of Korea to search for and acquire the wreckage and other materials concerning the aircraft of the Korean Airline company which was performing Flight 007, no other country, including the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, can conduct a search and acquire such wreckage and materials in international waters. The United States expects that the Soviet Union will not interfere in the search operations of the United States which it is properly authorized to conduct..."¹

1 AVP RF, f. 192, op. 73, p. 473, d. 4, pp. 45-49.

A note with identical content, N^o MFA/59/83, was sent to the Soviet MFA by the US embassy on 27 September 1983.

2 AVP RF, f. 129, op. 69, p. 402, d. 6, pp. 52-53a.

In a counter note from the Soviet MFA to the US embassy in Moscow (N^o 88/ossha of 9 October 1983) it was explained that "in accordance with Article 26 of the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation the investigation of the circumstances associated with the incursion of the South Korean aircraft into Soviet airspace is being performed by the Soviet Union, on whose territory the incident occurred", and inasmuch as the aforementioned incursion was "an intentional, premeditated intelligence operation directed against the Soviet Union" then all the search work undertaken by the Soviet side "is necessary for the purposes of the investigation being conducted and are completely legal".

Accordingly, the complaints described in the embassy note were called "completely groundless and unacceptable".

By the same token it was rejected "as a baseless protest in connection with the refusal of permission for a South Korean to be present during the handover of objects and documents which was held at the port of Nevelsk..."

The note said in conclusion that "instead of engaging in making various contrived complaints the American side ought to provide objective and complete information regarding the circumstances associated with the incursion of the intruding aircraft into Soviet [air]space..."³

3 AVP RF, f. 129, op. 69, p. 401, d. 1, pp. 151-152.

In connection with the investigation being conducted by the Soviet side regarding the incident that was referenced in the aforementioned note, in note 101/ossha of 30 November 1983 the Soviet MFA requested that the US government, via the American embassy in Moscow, place at the disposition of the Commission conducting this investigation "objective and complete information relating to the circumstances associated with the above aircraft's violation of Soviet airspace". "The Ministry expects", it said in the note, "that in accordance with established practice the American side will furnish information about issues of interest to the Commission in accordance with the attached list.

The Ministry proceeds from the position that the requested information concerning South Korea will also be furnished by the American side".

A nine-page list of questions relating to the flight, the crew of the aircraft, the aircraft itself, and the performance and flight control of the Boeing 747 which carried out the KAL 007 flight was attached to the note¹.

1 AVP RF, f. 129, op. 69, p. 401, d. 1, p. 171.

Even earlier, on 21 October 1983, in a conversation with Deputy Assistant Secretary of State M. Palmer, in accordance with existing instructions, O. M. Sokolov rejected verbal statements made on 7 and 19 October 1983 by State Department representatives about incidents which allegedly took place when Soviet aircraft and trawlers created obstacles to American and Japanese aircraft and ships operating in the area where the South Korean aircraft went down in the Sea of Japan as not corresponding to reality².

2 AVP RF, f. 059, op. 78, p. 90, d. 279, pp. 126-128; d. 280, pp. 53-58.

The American side was told that "it is not the Soviet, but the American aircraft operating in the search area in direct proximity to Soviet sea boundaries [that] are creating dangerous situations fraught with serious consequences..."; specific instances of such actions were cited. The Soviet side insisted that "the American side take the necessary steps to prohibit such incidents in the future like those indicated above". The American representative did not dispute the instances cited; M. Palmer noted that for their part they were quite interested in preserving and observing the 1972 Incidents at Sea Agreement and that the American search group had been given corresponding instructions¹.

1 AVP RF, f. 059, op. 78, p. 73, d. 242, pp. 246-247; p. 90, p. 231, pp. 44-45.

To the present time in the course of official contacts with American and South Korean representatives the issue has been raised at various levels of placing at the disposal of these countries trustworthy information relating to the circumstances of the Boeing 747 incident and also all the materials found after the crash of the aircraft. To the majority of such requests the responses given were on the order of that the complete results of the investigation were sent to ICAO and also to the Japanese and American sides in due course, and that the Soviet side has no additional information.

SENIOR ADVISER OF THE RF MFA IDU [DIRECTORATE OF HISTORY AND RECORDS]

[signature] V. A. MARTYNOV

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