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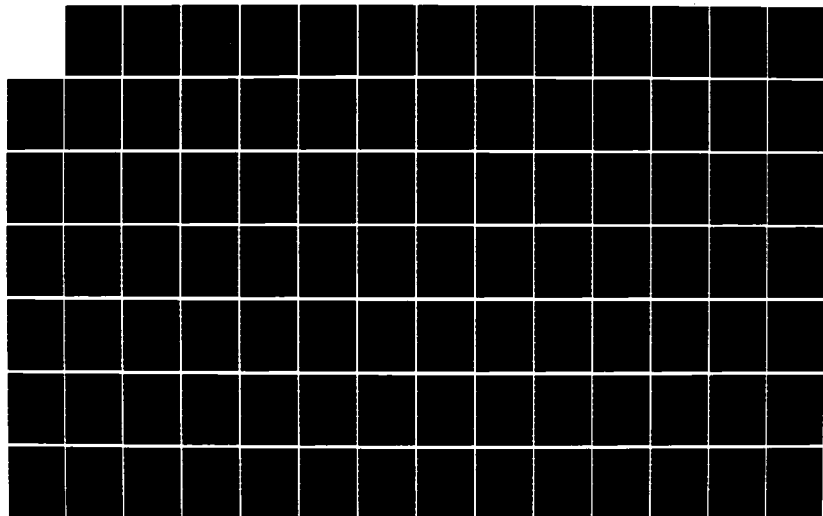
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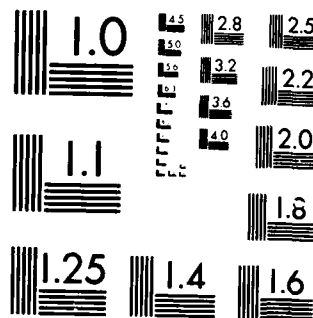
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THE SOVIET RESPONSE TO  
KOREAN AIR LINES FLIGHT 007

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by  
JERALD J. JORDAN  
B.A., Indiana University, 1973

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## ABSTRACT

THE SOVIET RESPONSE TO KOREAN AIR LINES FLIGHT 007: An analysis of selected events relating to the incident, by Mr. Jerald J. Jordan, 116 pages.

This study is an historical analysis of Soviet actions, verbal and actual, following the violation of USSR airspace by Korean Air Lines Flight KE-007 on the morning of 1 September 1983. Soviet and Western primary sources, as well as other literature, are examined to determine the nature of the Soviet response: their actions taken during the two and one half hours prior to termination of the flight, the ability of Soviet commanders to identify the Korean airliner, the level at which the final decision was made, and any adverse action taken by authorities against Soviets involved in the operation.

The study begins with an examination of views expressed by the Soviet Chief of the General Staff, Marshal Nikolaj V. Ogarkov, at a 9 September 1983 press conference, then analyzes articles published in the Soviet and Western press concerning the incident. Reaction to an earlier Korean commercial airliner which overflew Soviet Karelia and was subsequently forced down in 1978 is used for comparison.

The examination touches on various aspects contributing to the response, including the organization of Soviet Air Defense Forces, decision making at both civilian and military levels, disinformation, and strategic deception (maskirovka). Theories on the relationship between the Korean Air Lines incident and the dismissal of Marshal Nikolaj V. Ogarkov are considered.

The analysis finds that despite initial confusion as the Korean jet entered Soviet airspace, the military response went generally according to plan. Although the Soviets may have been aware that the airliner was a commercial 747, they were unsure of its mission and therefore assumed the worst. The final decision was strictly a military one, made by the theater air defense commander. There is no hard evidence of punishment having been meted out to those involved, but punishment is still a possibility.

The study concludes that the Soviets continue to handle border violations by following established military procedure. This method favors the use of military force over other ways of resolving the problem and limits the opportunity of the United States to influence the outcome. Disinformation and deception have been refined to the extent that, in this case, they were an integral and necessary part of the response.

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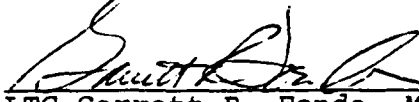
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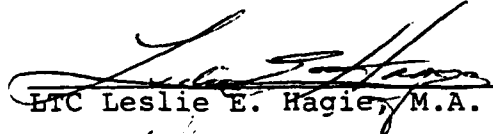
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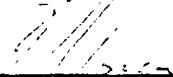
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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

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This study is an historical analysis of Soviet actions, verbal and actual, following the violation of USSR airspace by Korean Air Lines Flight KE-007 on the morning of 1 September 1983. Soviet and Western primary sources, as well as other literature, are examined to determine the nature of the Soviet response: their actions taken during the two and one half hours prior to termination of the flight, the ability of Soviet commanders to identify the Korean airliner, the level at which the final decision was made, and any adverse action taken by authorities against Soviets involved in the operation.

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--Jerald Jordan

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

"I cannot forecast to you the action of  
Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a  
mystery inside an enigma."

--Winston Churchill, in a broadcast,  
1 October 1939

In the early morning hours of 1 September 1983, Major Vasilij Konstantinovich Kazmin made a last-minute preflight check of his Su-15 interceptor, as he had done many times before.<sup>1</sup> His thoughts were with his daughter and the lesson he would be delivering to her class at school. He was to tell them about his 13 years as a pilot in one of the Soviet Union's most elite forces. But this lesson was not to be given. Shortly, he would be asked to do something else, something which would change not just his future, but that of the world. When he fired the missiles that shot down a civilian airliner en route from Anchorage, Alaska, to Seoul, Korea, he could not have known that he had just begun a series of events that would polarize the world and snuff out the careers of many people and the lives of many more.<sup>2</sup>

The shoot-down of Korean Air Lines flight KAL-007, tragic as it was, presents a unique opportunity for examining Soviet reactions to intrusions of its airspace. Unique, not because it's the only time an intruder has been destroyed, for it isn't. Unique, not because the incident was a mistake,

for it probably wasn't. But unique because world reaction to it was so strong that the Soviet Union took extraordinary measures in her own defense.

#### PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this thesis is to examine statements and actions taken by the Soviets in response to the KAL disaster, analyze them, and suggest what actually happened, why it happened, and whether it can happen again. As the task is enormous and dwarfs the time and resources available, the scope has been narrowed by taking a few critical portions of the incident and examining data associated with them. These data may then indicate logical conclusions. Specifically, four sections of the event have been chosen for scrutiny:

1. The 150 minutes of inaction before KAL-007 was shot down
2. The identification of the intruder
3. Who made the decision to shoot
4. The fate of the Soviets involved

The reasons for the selection of these particular sections are included in chapter two.

After all evidence concerning these four areas is compiled, each statement and action is carefully examined, using the following three questions:

1. Does it conform to accepted facts or not? If not, what is different?
2. Was it reasonable under the circumstances? If not, why not?
3. If a statement, was it later modified, contradicted, or in some other way changed? If so, what can be learned from this?

Once this methodology has been completed, conclusions can be drawn with a reasonable degree of confidence as to what happened on the morning of 1 September, why it happened, and under what circumstances it could be repeated.

#### LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

The scope of this study is limited to the Soviet reaction to the border violation of Korean Air Lines flight 007, its subsequent destruction, and the consequences for the Soviet Union. However, to analyze this event thoroughly, previous border violations and Soviet reactions to them must also be addressed, when they are pertinent to this study.

Essays on Soviet decision making are used to interpret the significance of some effects and to suggest possible causes, but this is not in itself a paper on the Soviet decision-making process. Nor does the paper focus on why the Korean plane was flying over Soviet territory, nor investigate whether it was on a spy mission for the U.S. government.

Finally, this study is limited by time. Just over a year has passed since the incident occurred. Some facts have just recently come to light while others will not be known for some years to come, if ever. The bulk of the sources are primary, most written between September 1983 and September 1984. While it would, no doubt, be convenient to limit the time covered by this paper to that one-year period, it could result in assertions based on incomplete data. Therefore,

some data published after that period are drawn upon when they contribute to the general understanding.

#### IMPORTANCE OF THIS STUDY

The primary value of this study is to provide an historical account describing how and why the Soviets took military action in this case and under what circumstances they would do it again. This account is meant for use by national-level authorities as an aid in preventing future conflicts of this sort. But the rewards of research need not be limited to the narrow area of predicting reactions to border violations.

Rarely has an event forced the Soviets into taking public-relations measures as extraordinary as those taken following the destruction of the Korean airliner. Few times in the past has the Soviet Union found itself receiving almost universal condemnation, from the Western Block and Third World alike. Seldom have Soviet leaders felt it necessary to take such pains to justify military action. Hardly ever have so many Soviet bureaucrats and military officers been used to defend their country's policies before the world press.

Because this study deals with an event that cannot be neatly defined as affecting only military interests, it may provide general information on a wide range of topics pertinent to Soviet decision making. For example, some findings may contribute to the knowledge about Soviet



responses to international pressure. The Soviets responded in some ways which could be construed as attempts to shift the guilt of their actions from themselves to others, primarily the United States. Other responses could be interpreted as an application of pressure on other nations to support the Soviets in this matter.

If it is found that the border violation was not expected by the Soviets and that they misjudged the degree of world reaction to it, then this study could contribute to the understanding of Soviet handling of crisis situations. On the other hand, if the study concludes that the Soviets not only expected this incident to occur, but carried out their deadly mission exactly according to plan, research data herein could be used to examine the effectiveness of Soviet planning, warning, and execution. Other areas that can benefit from this paper are studies of Soviet deception (maskirovka), propaganda, disinformation, foreign policy, and leadership.

Although the intention is to focus on the military response, it would be impossible not to touch on the matters mentioned above. Valuable knowledge and new information are not parochial, for they can benefit all areas of study.

#### FORECAST OF CHAPTERS

To cover all above-mentioned areas of the KAL-007 incident, this thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter one contains the introduction and presentation of the

problem statement, and the value of the study.

Chapter two addresses the preparation of this thesis. The chapter combines a survey of literature with a short discussion of methods and procedures used to research and present the findings.

The first part of the chapter, methods and procedures, covers the research questions, why they were chosen, and how they were used. It also addresses the reliability and, in some cases, the predictability of both the Soviet and American press. It describes how to exploit anomalies in order to confirm certain actions and infer others.

The purpose of the survey of literature, chapter two, part two, is to summarize and critique much of the material covered during research. While not a bibliography, the survey briefly lists the major works, a critical analysis of some of them, and their relevancy to this thesis. Included are articles found during research which were not used because they were inappropriate to the subject. They are listed for the benefit of future researchers of the Korean Air Lines incident, so that they may save time in their own work.

Chapter three sets the scene. It presents the first research question: what took place during the two and a half hours between the time Korean Air Lines 007 first entered Soviet airspace and the time the flight was terminated over the Sea of Japan. The examination includes an analysis of statements made by the Chief of the General Staff, Marshal Ogarkov, during and after the 9 September press conference.

The chapter introduces the Korean pilot and copilot and discusses their possible responses to the Soviet action.

Chapter three summarizes the information uncovered and presents four possible scenarios of action during the key time period. The chapter ends with a description of the most likely actions that took place, thus answering the research question.

Chapter four presents the findings for the remaining three research questions--the question of who could have given the final order to destroy the plane, the controversy over Soviet identification of the aircraft, and the fate of the Soviets involved. Included are an analysis of the Soviet statements, an examination of other accepted theories, and a selection of the most likely answer to each of the questions posed.

Chapter five contains the conclusions, lessons learned, and the effect this incident has on U.S. decision makers in the future. Chapter five also contains recommendations for further study on the Korean Air Lines incident.

Following chapter five are appendices containing the bibliography, a guide to the transliteration system used in this thesis, a list of abbreviations, acronyms, and foreign words, and a sequence of events containing not only exact times of events during the shoot-down, but also a short chronology of major violations of Soviet airspace since World War II.

## SUMMARY

Winston Churchill's statement quoted at the beginning of this chapter applies to the Soviet Union today as much as it did in 1939. It is imperative that our primary adversary not be a mystery to us, that we be able to understand any action taken by the Soviet Union and her motives for doing so. If, as in this case, the Soviet Union uses military force against non-combatant civilians in time of peace, the need to understand exactly what happened and why becomes ever more crucial.

In this light, whether the reader agrees with the conclusion of this study or not, it will still serve to document this singularly important event for use by future researchers. This documentation, along with any new theories presented for consideration, the examination of known facts, and the explanation of previously confusing motives for Soviet actions, will hopefully contribute to a better understanding of the Soviet Union and eventually solving the riddle, clearing up the mystery, and removing the enigma.

## CHAPTER 1

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Only once has the pilot's name ever appeared in print, in an article for Air Force Magazine by Yossef Bodansky ("Death By the Book," December 1983, p.37). Mr. Bodansky does not reveal his source of this information.

<sup>2</sup>Colonel V. Filatov, "A Plane Took Off from Anchorage," Krasnaya Zvezda, 13 September 1983, p.3.

CHAPTER 2  
RESEARCH METHODS and  
a SURVEY OF LITERATURE

"You know my methods, Watson."  
--Sherlock Holmes, "The Crooked Man"

In order to make this thesis as valuable for you, the reader, as it has been for me, the researcher, we must begin with a common understanding; you must "know my methods." Chapter one has given you my research topic and its value as I see it. In this chapter I outline how I've prepared the study. If you understand the methods and sources used in reaching the final product as well as the ones discounted along the way, you will better understand (though not necessarily agree with) the conclusions reached.

Specifically, in this chapter the research methods and a survey of literature are introduced--two topics which are inseparable, that is, one logically follows from the other. For example, the historical method used in this thesis is only appropriate when literature is available. An analytic method must be used when few references exist.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Secrecy permeates all official matters in the Soviet

Union. When Soviet officialdom is silent, this secrecy is extremely difficult to penetrate. When authorities begin to talk, however, we're given not necessarily the true story but tantalizing bits of information that can lead us to it.

I chose to write about the KAL-007 incident because it was important; I chose to write about it because it was interesting; but most of all, I chose to write about this event because the Soviets chose to speak about it. Whether they spoke from confusion or from being pressured is unimportant; what is important is that they spoke. And therein lies my method for dealing with the secrecy. Verbiage provides the rock to be mined for nuggets of truth.

As this incident has many aspects, an inductive approach is used: select four elements of the event, analyze them in detail, and draw conclusions which could be applied to the entire incident. These four--the 150 minute period before termination of the flight, the identification of the target, the decision, and the subsequent fate of the Soviets involved--can provide sufficient detail to make those conclusions and to provide a foundation for further research.

After KAL-007 entered Soviet airspace over Kamchatka another two and one half hours would pass before it would be destroyed. This fact is intriguing. Had the considerable Soviet air defense machinery been set into motion? Was this length of time necessary to complete the sequence of events? Or was this a conscious decision to let the flight continue?

Why would the Soviets allow the flight to exit their airspace safely, only to destroy it later as it was leaving a second time? Could the Soviets not have known about the intrusion or not have been able to find the plane if they did know? Whatever the answers to these questions, it's clear that to be valid any synopsis of Soviet responses to the events of 1 September should include details on this time period.

Likewise, Soviet intentions toward the Korean plane can only be understood if it can be determined whether or not they were aware it was a civilian airliner. There is no shortage of speculation, charges, and countercharges concerning the identification controversy, but what are the facts?

Thirdly, the eventual fate of the Soviets embroiled in this issue should be examined. Studies of the previous Soviet shoot-down of a Korean Air Lines jet over Kamchatka in 1978 (discussed in chapter three) found that the official version differed considerably from an unofficial and probably more accurate one based upon accounts of the fate of the Chief of Soviet Air Defense Forces (PVO) and other key people. This emphasizes the need to study the fate of people involved in the latest situation.

Finally and possibly most importantly, is the decision itself. A Soviet government statement indicated that the decision was made by a local air defense commander.<sup>1</sup> If this is true, the implications concerning Soviet air



defense response in a crisis, such as this one, are different from those if the national military or political establishments had been called into the affair. Buried in the literature concerning these four areas are patterns and incongruities, many significant enough to merit intensive examination.

Whether statements made by Soviet sources or information taken from the Western press, all data are measured against a set of questions (figure 1). Soviet positions can be examined for consistency over time. As early as 5 September, PVO Chief of Staff Colonel General Romanov implied that the Soviets thought they were dealing with an American RC-135 reconnaissance aircraft.<sup>2</sup> By the end of September, the story had been changed to one carefully detailing a commercial aircraft on a reconnaissance mission.<sup>3</sup> On the face of it, this completely changed the significance of the action.

Also, valid information can come not just from those things that are different or eventually changed, but also from those that never change. A position taken during an exchange of accusations and not later modified must be accepted not necessarily as correct, but as having been confirmed as a wise position to take. In addition, one must be careful to avoid rejecting good information simply because a version of the story has been changed from one day to the next. Often this change results not from motive, but simply from lack of communication and exchange of

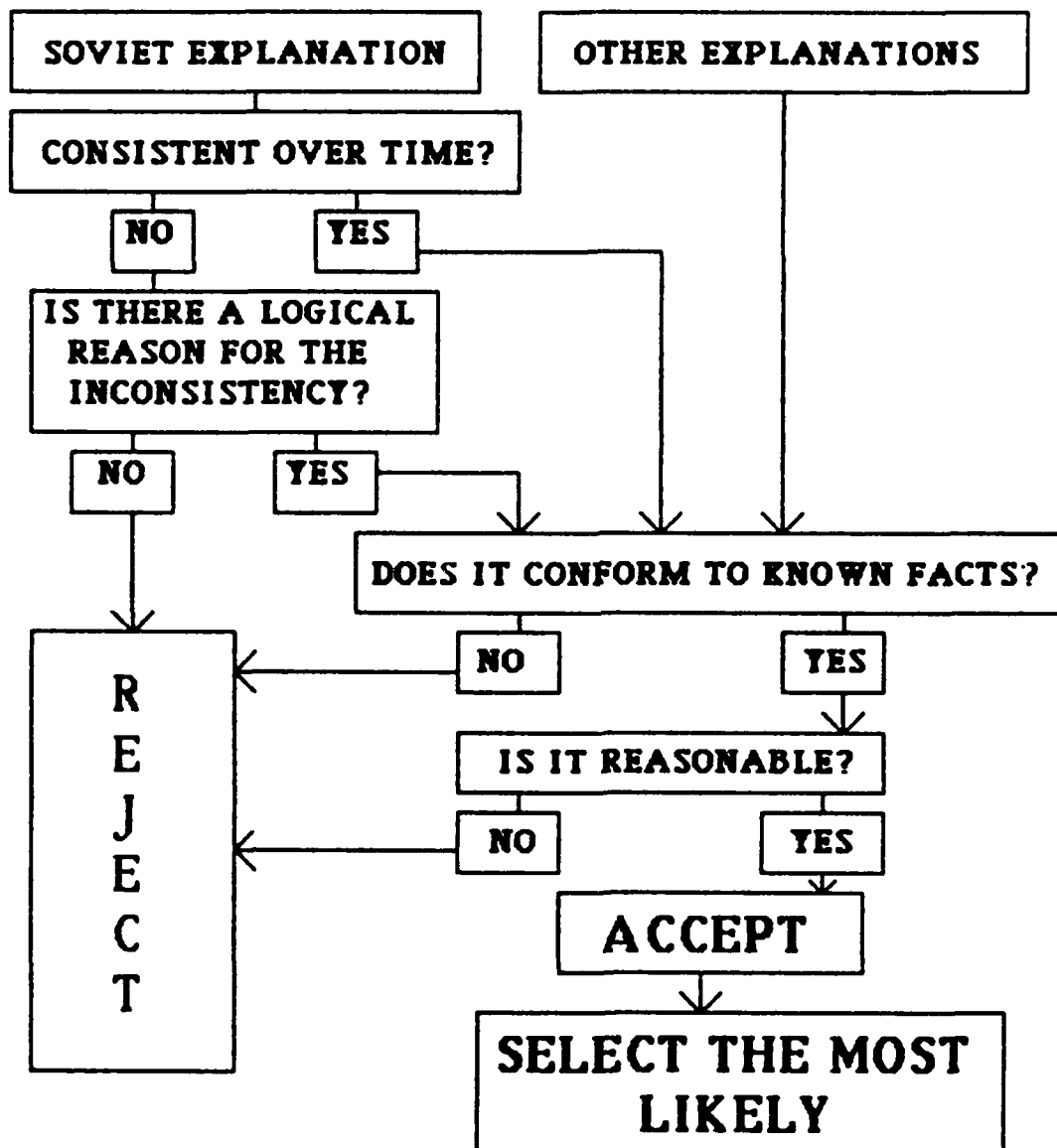


FIGURE 1--METHODOLOGY FLOW CHART

information between authorities.

Next, which statements are contradicted by known facts? For instance, the Soviet statement that KAL-007 did not have its aerial navigation lights on<sup>4</sup> was contradicted by the transcript of the intercept where the fighter pilot reported just the opposite.<sup>5</sup> This conflict forces one to reevaluate the facts and either discard them, or search for the reason for the discrepancy.

Then the responses are weighed against reason. Is it reasonable to assume, for example, that a local air defense commander would make the decision to shoot down an intruder? Of course, what is reasonable can only be determined after carefully researching the past.

Once all invalid explanations (Soviet and Western) have been rejected, the remaining credible ones are ranked in order of most likely to have occurred. This, then, is the methodology, the tool used to piece together the puzzle.

#### SURVEY OF LITERATURE

Equally as important to research are the references. In the case of the downing of the Korean airliner a paradox exists: there is a wealth of opinion but a dearth of facts. Nevertheless, many articles are extremely helpful in building a case.

First, however, there are problems using material published in the press. Most of the articles concerning the KAL incident were written in newspapers, magazines, or

technical journals, both Soviet and Western. Each source contributes a different kind of information, the most helpful being the technical journals of both countries and the least helpful being the Western newspapers.

#### The Soviet Press

Most of the information appearing in the Soviet press was published in the two main national newspapers, Pravda and Izvestiya. Generally speaking, the articles in Izvestiya had been published in Pravda the day before. A third newspaper, Krasnaya Zvezda, published by the Ministry of Defense, also carried quite a few stories on the incident. One can accept the reports in these newspapers as valid indicators of the official Soviet position; at least there is no reason to believe otherwise. Although the first article in Pravda didn't appear until 2 September, a full day after Western press reports had been published, the Soviet newspapers carried regular accounts after that date. The reports at first were simply announcements describing the Soviet version of events, but by 4 September editorial comment had appeared. The editorials themselves quickly developed from merely support of the Soviet position to attacks on the American version. Some editorials also summarized accounts in the foreign press sympathetic to the Soviet position. After the appearance of the 5 September article by Colonel General Romanov, who answered American accusations and made some of his own,<sup>6</sup> several articles on the incident written by other prominent Soviets appeared.

There is less information to be found in Soviet magazines, but articles did appear in issues of Soviet Military Review and New Times concerning the KAL incident. One of the most interesting of these is by Professor Nikolaj Yakovlev in New Times, entitled "Cold War Kamakazes."<sup>7</sup> In the article, Yakovlev comments on the history of US overflights of Soviet territory, providing a good account of the Soviet version of these flights. Unfortunately, his article adds little to the information on the KAL-007.

After December 1983 few references were made to the incident, the last ones being on the anniversary of the flight, in September 1984. Soviet periodicals continue to provide information on individuals who were prominent in the affair; for instance, in May 1984 Krasnaya Zvezda reported the obituary of Colonel General Romanov.<sup>8</sup>

#### The Western Press

As can reasonably be expected, the Western press provides probably the most reliable accounts of the story, but perhaps less predictably it also carries the least reliable. Unlike the Soviet press, in which one can logically assume that a statement, even if false, is more or less supported by the government, information in the Western press is riddled with misleading information, contradictions, and falsehoods that actually prove to be nothing more than poor journalism. Newspaper reports of the flight, especially those written shortly after the incident, can many times be discounted because of these inaccuracies. An example of a

misleading account, published just after the Soviet action, can be found in the London Sunday Times, in an article of 4 September entitled "Shortcut to Disaster." Said to be based on "expert observers," "gossip in Tokyo," and "British pilots," much of the information it reports as factual is highly suspect.<sup>9</sup> Still, it makes interesting reading, presents some valid points, and includes a very good map outlining one possible sequence of events of the morning of 1 September.

#### Professional Journals

By far the most useful sources of information are the technical and professional journals. A good place to start any research on the KAL disaster is in the 12 September issue of Aviation Week & Space Technology, which has a transcript (in English) of the pilot's transmissions during the interception.<sup>10</sup> Other articles which contribute interesting data on the subject include:

1. "Deadly Guardians of Soviet Airspace" by Harriet Fast Scott;<sup>11</sup> a short history of the Soviet Air Defense Forces and some interesting comments on the PVO Commander in Chief.

2. "Soviet Pilots: How Do They Measure Up?" by Edward J. Bavaro,<sup>12</sup> and "Closing the Tactics Gap" by Capt. Rana J. Pennington;<sup>13</sup> both articles provide information on the training and capabilities of Soviet fighter pilots.

3. "What Really Happened to Flight 007" by Viktor Belenko.<sup>14</sup> Belenko is the Soviet fighter pilot who defected

to the United States after flying the MiG-25 from his base in the Soviet Far East to a civilian airport in Japan. The article is pretty much a repeat of information in the book about his defection, MiG Pilot, but is still interesting reading. Unfortunately, this article appears only in the Canadian edition of the Readers Digest.

4. "Is Soviet Radar Really That Bad?" by Dr. Yitzhak Tarasulo.<sup>15</sup> This is a fascinating article by a former Soviet radar technician who served in the Soviet Far East. Doctor Tarasulo maintains that the training of radar technicians, the frequent RC-135 flights in the Soviet Far East, and the obvious differences between the RC-135 and the Boeing 747 make it highly unlikely that the Soviets got the two planes confused. He describes the training of Soviet pilots and explains what probably happened in the ground station when the intruder was discovered.

5. Two articles, "Moscow Prepares for Strategy Changes: KA-007 is the Watershed,"<sup>16</sup> and "Why Did the Soviets Attack the Korean Airliner,"<sup>17</sup> deal with the Soviet decision-making process and suggest reasons why national-level interests could have provided the motive for shooting the plane down.

6. "Reassessing the Sakhalin Incident" by P.Q. Mann<sup>18</sup> is an anonymous (the name is a pseudonym) treatise in a respected British journal arguing that the KAL-007 was on a spy mission for the U.S. and presents evidence in support of this position. It does not bear directly on

this thesis, but is well written and is probably of great interest to anyone studying Soviet disinformation.

7. Massacre 747 by Canadian Maj-Gen Richard Rohmer<sup>19</sup> is the only book written so far on the journey of KAL-007 and is required reading for anyone studying the incident. General Rohmer addresses most of the major questions concerning the flight, including the possible reasons the Korean airliner was over Soviet airspace in the first place and whether or not the plane was on a spy mission. Although he touches on many of the same topics as this thesis, most of his conclusions differ from the ones presented here.

To sum up, technical and professional journals are the most lucrative sources of information published in the West concerning the KAL incident for in-depth analysis and educated opinion. Newspapers, while often unreliable, are sometimes helpful in establishing the sequence of events. Soviet publications can be relied upon to support the party line, which is of itself an important source of study. For those who do not read Russian but would like to examine articles from the Soviet newspapers, The Current Digest of the Soviet Press publishes translations of the most substantial articles.

#### SUMMARY

In this chapter I've presented the method of analysis being used in this thesis. Soviet responses involving the four major elements of the KAL incident are compared with



accepted facts, compared with what is reasonable, and compared over time in order to determine what could have logically taken place. We've gone over some of the sources of interest and identified which are the most valuable, which are suspect and why. Now, "you know my methods, Watson."

## CHAPTER 2

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>"Soviet Government Statement," Pravda, 7 September 1983, p.1.

<sup>2</sup>Colonel General S. Romanov, "A Political Provocation with a Far-Reaching Aim," Pravda, 5 September 1983, p.5.

<sup>3</sup>Marshal of Aviation Kirsanov, "The Facts Expose Washington," Pravda, 20 September 1983, p.4.

<sup>4</sup>Romanov, "Political Provocation."

<sup>5</sup>"US Intercepts Soviet Fighter Transmissions," Aviation Week & Space Technology, 12 September 1983, pp.22-23.

<sup>6</sup>Romanov, "Politician Provocation."

<sup>7</sup>Professor Nikolaj Yakovlev, "Cold War Kamikazes," New Times, September 1983, p.26.

<sup>8</sup>"Obituary," Krasnaya Zvezda, 22 May 1984, p.4.

<sup>9</sup>"Shortcut to Disaster," The Sunday Times, 4 September 1983.

<sup>10</sup>"US Intercepts Soviet Fighter Transmissions."

<sup>11</sup>Harriet Fast Scott, "Deadly Guardians of Soviet Airspace," Air Force Magazine, March 1984, pp.74-82.

<sup>12</sup>Edward J. Bavaro, "Soviet Pilots: How Do They Measure Up?," US Army Aviation Digest, August 1983, pp.32-35.

<sup>13</sup>Capt. Rana J. Pennington, "Closing the Tactics Gap," Air Force Magazine, March 1984, pp.83-88.

<sup>14</sup>Viktor Belenko, "What Really Happened to Flight 007?," Readers Digest (Canadian), January 1984, pp.25-27.

<sup>15</sup>Dr. Yitzhak Tarasulo, "Is Soviet Radar Really That Bad?," Armed Forces Journal, February 1984, pp.70-74.

<sup>16</sup>Gregory R. Copley, "Moscow Prepares for Strategy Changes: KA-007 is the Watershed," Defense & Foreign

Affairs, November 1983, pp.35-38.

<sup>17</sup>Steven J. Cimbala, "Why Did the Soviets Attack the Korean Airliner?," National Defense, May/June 1984, pp.77-79, 268.

<sup>18</sup>P.Q. Mann, "Reassessing the Sakhalin Incident," Defence Attache, 3 (1984): pp.41-56.

On 28 November 1984, the Daily News Digest reported that Korean Air Lines won a libel suit brought against Defence Attache because of this article. Defence Attache was forced to admit that there was no foundation for Mann's charges.

<sup>19</sup>Maj-Gen Richard Rohmer, Massacre 747 (Markham, Ontario: PaperJacks, 1984).

CHAPTER 3  
THE FINAL MINUTES OF  
KOREAN AIR LINES FLIGHT 007

TASS Report: During the night of 31 August to 1 September an aircraft of undetermined origin entered the airspace of the Soviet Union from the Pacific Ocean over the Kamchatka peninsula, then violated USSR airspace for a second time over Sakhalin Island. The aircraft was flying without air navigation lights, did not respond to inquiries, and did not get in touch with the radio-dispatcher service.

Air Defense fighters sent up to meet the intruding aircraft tried to render assistance and escort it to the closest airfield. However, the intruding aircraft did not respond to the signals and warnings sent by Soviet fighters and continued its flight towards the Sea of Japan."

--Pravda, 2 September 1983<sup>1</sup>

This chapter examines the veracity of Soviet and Western accounts during the final two and one half hours of Korean Air Lines flight 007. This period can be broken down into three stages: (1) KAL's movements over Kamchatka, (2) the flight over the Sea of Okhotsk, and (3) the final minutes over Sakhalin Island and the Sea of Japan. Once the Soviet side has been presented, the first stage is analyzed, theories and explanations examined according to the methodology set down in chapter two, and conclusions drawn. The process is then repeated for the two remaining stages. The chapter concludes with a summary of the entire two and

one half hours of flight 007, based on the most likely events chosen from each stage.

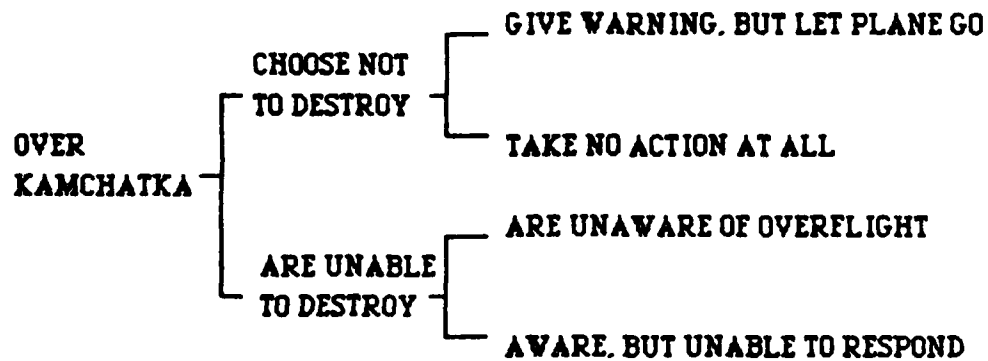
#### DESCRIPTION OF THE THREE STAGES

It has been generally accepted by all sides involved that KAL-007 diverted from its proposed flight route sometime after leaving Anchorage, entered Soviet airspace over the southeastern coast of the Kamchatka peninsula and, after flying over a Soviet military installation, continued from Kamchatka to international waters over the Sea of Okhotsk. The plane then reentered Soviet airspace, overflew the island of Sakhalin and, as it was approaching international waters over the Sea of Japan, was shot down by a Su(Khoj)-15 interceptor using air-to-air missiles. Beyond these few accepted facts, views diverge.

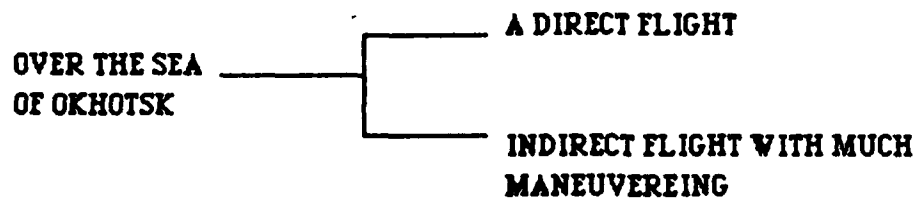
Probably the most puzzling aspect of the Soviet response to this intrusion is not that the Soviets finally brought the plane down, but that they did not do so earlier. What was going on in the Soviet Union as the plane was flying over Kamchatka during stage one of the flight? (see figure 2)

Although many details may be examined, many assertions challenged, the Soviet response in stage one can be classified in one of two ways: either they chose not to destroy the plane or they were unable to destroy it. If they chose not to destroy it, a further breakdown can be made: they warned the intruder, but allowed the flight to continue even when these

### STAGE ONE



### STAGE TWO



### STAGE THREE



FIGURE 2--THE THREE STAGES OF FLIGHT KAL-007 AND POSSIBLE SOVIET RESPONSES TO EACH

warnings were ignored; or they took no action at all to stop the plane. If, on the other hand, the Soviets were unable to destroy KAL-007, it would have been due to one of two possible reasons. Either they were unaware of the overflight or they could not react quickly enough to do anything about it. These are the questions that are considered in stage one.

After KAL-007 left Kamchatka, it entered international airspace over the Sea of Okhotsk. There is little evidence as to the plane's progress during this, the penultimate stage of its flight. The simplest route would have been to fly directly to Sakhalin Island, but the Soviets have put forward another explanation of the plane's actions during this second stage.

The third and final stage of the journey of flight 007 was again in Soviet airspace, first over Sakhalin Island, then above the Sea of Japan. The tape recordings made public by the US government at a session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 1983, have precluded much disagreement between the Soviets and the West on the actual events. However, differences still remain on some specific issues, such as whether the Soviet fighter pilot warned the Korean plane before firing and whether or not KAL-007's air navigation lights were turned on.

#### THE SOVIET VIEW

The Soviet version of events in the three stages is summarized in Figure 3. During stage one, the Soviets take

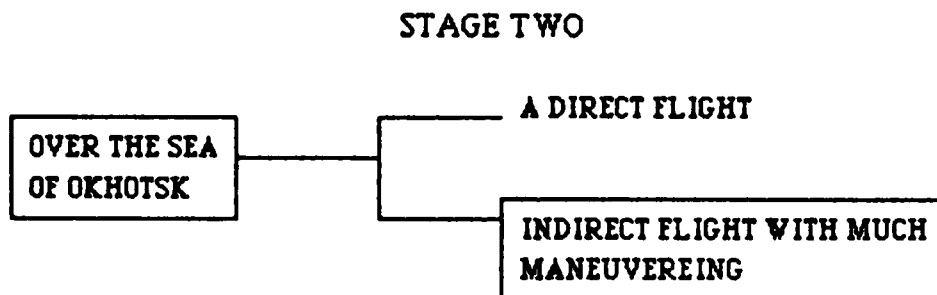
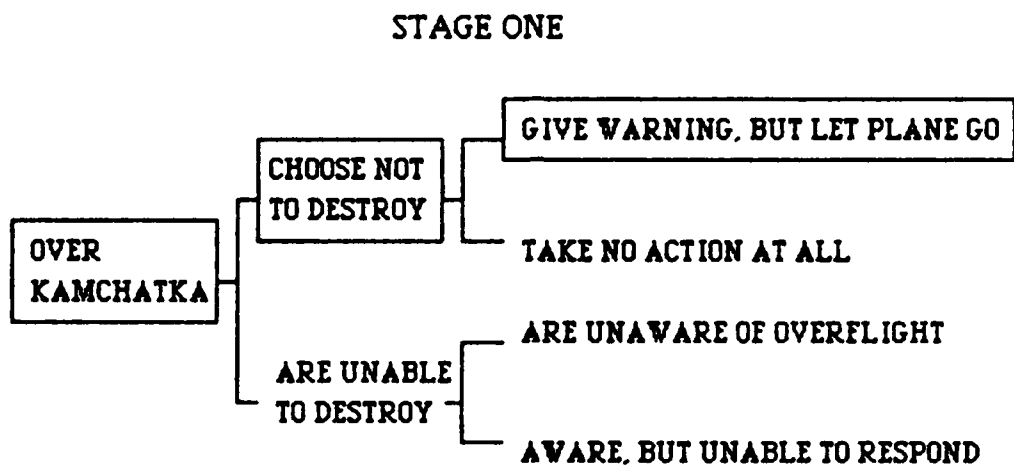


FIGURE 3--THE SOVIET VERSION OF EVENTS AS THEY  
OCCURRED ON 1 SEPTEMBER 1983



the position that they reacted to KAL-007's overflight of Kamchatka and ordered it to land, but when it did not they chose not to end the flight, but instead to allow the plane to continue out over international waters. As the plane flew over the Sea of Okhotsk, it took evasive action, the most obvious maneuver being a sharp turn toward Sakhalin prior to reentering Soviet airspace. All of this maneuvering seemed to reinforce the Soviet Air Defense commander's belief that KAL-007 was a reconnaissance aircraft, so that when it refused to acknowledge warnings given a final time over Sakhalin Island, the Soviets had no choice but to terminate the flight.<sup>2</sup>

Most of the details were given by Marshal Ogarkov in his news conference: The Korean airliner was first detected (by the Soviets) flying on a course for the Kamchatka peninsula approximately 800 kilometers northeast of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy and about 500 kilometers off the international flight route. At 4:51 A.M. (Kamchatka time) KAL-007 rendezvoused with an American RC-135 reconnaissance plane. They flew together for approximately ten minutes before parting, the RC-135 returning to Alaska while the Korean flight continued on towards Petropavlovsk. Ogarkov commented, "It was natural that the Soviet Air Defense command posts reached the conclusion that a reconnaissance aircraft was approaching the airspace of the USSR."<sup>3</sup>

Ogarkov continued, "By 5:30 the plane was approaching Kamchatka, heading directly for one of the USSR's most

important strategic nuclear force bases."<sup>4</sup> The Soviet ground stations tried contacting the intruder on 121.5 megahertz (mhz), the international emergency frequency, as did the fighter-interceptors sent up in reaction, but this was all to no avail--KAL-007 did not answer. KAL-007 continued on course, flying out over the Sea of Okhotsk.<sup>5</sup>

In stage two the intruder's actions became defiant to the Soviets i.e., changing direction, altitude, and speed--all at the same time--and sharply banking away from the PVO fighters. At 6:02 A.M. it sharply changed course, avoiding anti-aircraft weapons and taking a heading toward important military objectives in the southern part of Sakhalin Island. "No doubt remained--the plane in the air was a reconnaissance aircraft."<sup>6</sup>

During stage three the plane flew over the southwestern portion of the island and was again warned to land at an airport. At 6:20 A.M. a Soviet interceptor made a final warning, this time firing 120 rounds of cannon fire. Instead of responding, KAL-007 changed course once more, now toward Vladivostok. At 6:24 A.M. the interceptor pilot received the order to interrupt the flight with rockets, which he did.<sup>7</sup>

At the press conference Ogarkov referred to a prepared map of Kamchatka, the Sea of Okhotsk, and Sakhalin Island with the normal track of the international air routes on it, and what was called the flight route of KAL-007. The map showed the plane entering Soviet airspace at Kronotskij Point and flying on a heading of approximately 230 degrees

until leaving Kamchatka near the town of Oktyabr'skij, never passing over the city of Petropavlovsk itself. The plane continued on a heading of 230 degrees until just northeast of the city of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk on Sakhalin Island, where it made a sharp westerly turn (at 6:10 A.M., according to Ogarkov) then continued south, flying over Sakhalin Island. The map shows that if this turn had not been made, KAL-007 would have actually flown between the Kuril' Islands and Sakhalin, eventually coming to the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido. (map 1)

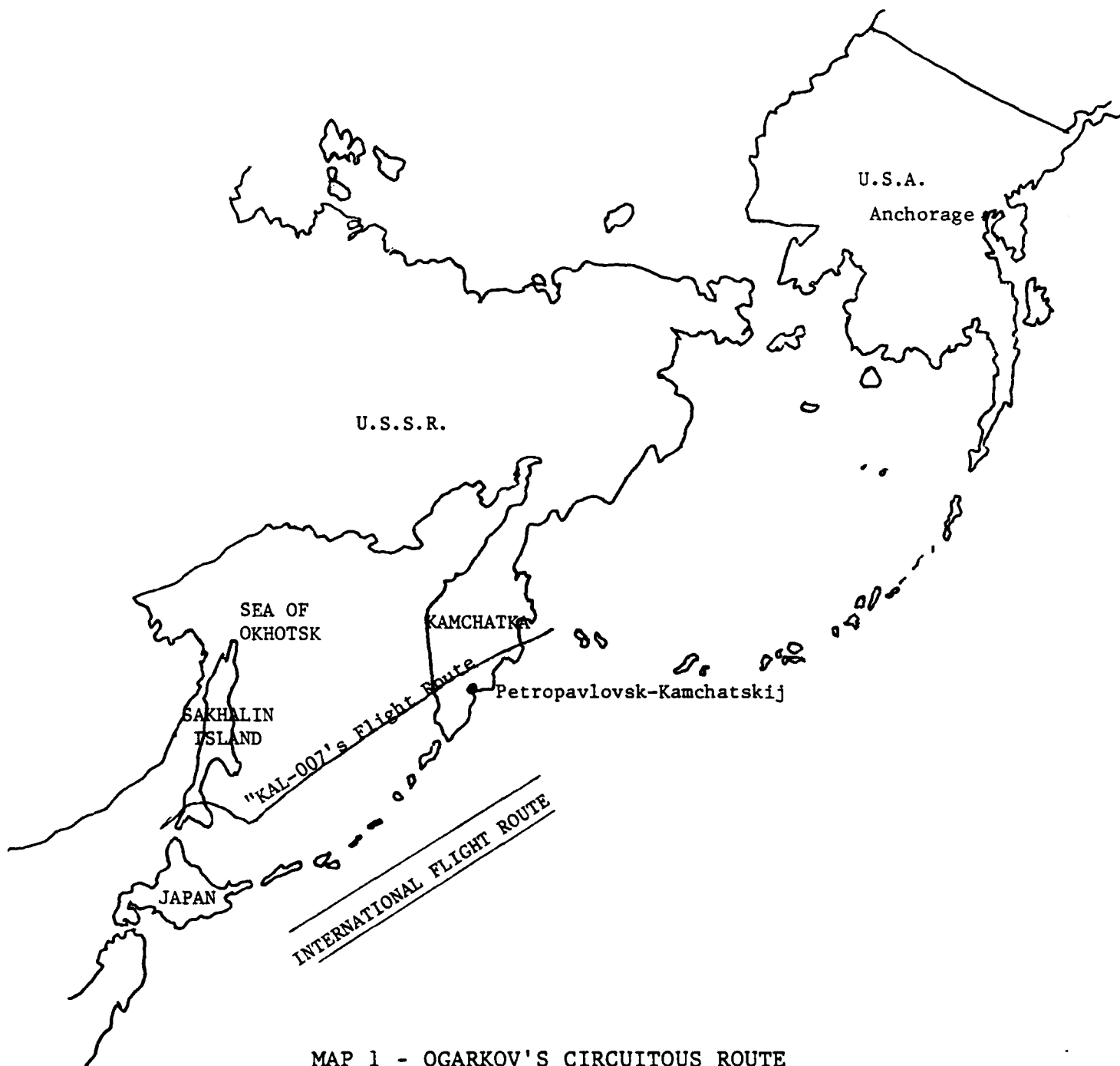
Other Soviet accounts of the flight are similar to the one given by Ogarkov. Interviews with the Air Defense fighter pilots who flew in reaction, both on Kamchatka and over Sakhalin, stress their patriotism and devotion to duty.<sup>8</sup> Some Soviet articles concentrate on the identification of the intruder--covered in chapter four of this thesis--and add support to various Soviet positions, such as whether or not KAL-007 had its air navigation beacons turned on.

#### STAGE ONE: KAMCHATKA

##### An Analysis of the Four Options

1. They chose not to destroy the plane, even after warning it to land.

The Soviets maintain that their reaction over Kamchatka was measured and responsible; that they knew KAL-007 was in their airspace and (though they gave it offers



MAP 1 - OGARKOV'S CIRCUITOUS ROUTE

as shown in press conference  
in Moscow, 9 September  
1983

of assistance and warnings to land) chose not to destroy it (even after these warnings were ignored).

In order to believe the Soviet version of the incident, two crucial assumptions must be accepted: (1) that the Soviet Union warned KAL-007 and attempted to force it to land at one of their air bases, and (2) that, having received these warnings, the Korean pilot ignored them. The evidence very strongly discourages acceptance of either assumption.

Did the Soviets attempt to warn KAL-007 and force it to land at one of their airfields? The Soviets say both their ground stations and their interceptors tried to contact the Korean plane on 121.5 megahertz (mhz), the international emergency frequency. Several Western sources postulate that, contrary to Soviet claims, radios on Soviet fighter aircraft are not able to transmit or receive on 121.5 megahertz (mhz).<sup>9</sup> By making radio contact between Soviet pilots and international flight crews impossible, the Soviets mean to discourage defection of their pilots. Maj-Gen Richard Rohmer, former Chief of Reserves of the Canadian Armed Forces and investigator into the Korean Air Lines flight, supports this assertion. "The Soviet fighters that intercepted the Korean jet used an emergency guard channel in a very high frequency that is preset on the ground and cannot be tuned by the pilot once his aircraft is airborne. This frequency is not compatible with the 121.5 [megahertz] or 243.0 megacycles guard channels used by commercial and military aircraft of the west. This is to preclude defection by Soviet pilots."<sup>10</sup>

Describing the defection of Viktor Belenko, the Soviet pilot who flew his MiG-25 from a Soviet airbase to Japan in the mid-seventies, John Barron writes, "To prevent MiG-25 pilots from talking with foreign pilots, the radios were restricted to a very narrow frequency band that permitted communications only with other MiGs and Ground Control. . Thus [Belenko] would be unable to tell the Japanese of his intentions or to ask their guidance."<sup>11</sup> Belenko himself asserts that not even ground controllers have this capability. "In my time, there was no 'dispatcher service' or ground-control system on either Kamchatka or Sakhalin capable of communication with foreign aircraft."<sup>12</sup>

Belenko then brings up another important point. "Moreover, none of the [other] half-dozen commercial planes in the air or ground monitoring stations heard any warning over the international emergency frequency."<sup>13</sup> Not even the crew of a second Korean airliner, flight 015, heard any activity on 121.5 mhz. This airliner was flying close behind (approximately one half hour) on the normal international flight route to Seoul and within radiocommunications range.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, there is no support for the Soviet claim that they attempted to contact the Korean airliner as it flew over Kamchatka. Indeed, there is strong reason to believe that neither the ground stations nor the Soviet interceptors could have made radio contact with KAL-007 even if they had tried. Radio contact, therefore, is unlikely; the first assumption cannot be proven.

Did the Korean pilot ignore warnings given by the Soviets? This second assumption is even less likely. Captain Chun Byung In, 45, before piloting the ill-fated KAL-007 flight, had experience as a pilot in the South Korean Air Force and with Korean Air Lines, with over 6000 flying hours on Boeing 747s. As a measure of regard the Koreans held for him as a pilot, he was selected in 1983 to fly the South Korean President and other dignitaries to the United States on an official visit. His copilot, also an Air Force veteran, had over 3000 hours on 747s.<sup>15</sup>

Both the Korean pilot and his copilot were aware of the 1978 incident when the Soviets shot down a Korean Air Lines Boeing 707 after it had strayed over the Kola Peninsula. Although the Soviet fighter pilot fired on this earlier Korean flight (without warning), the Korean pilot managed to land the plane safely on a frozen lake east of Leningrad. The Soviets immediately returned the passengers, but kept the pilot and navigator in interrogation for a short time before releasing them.<sup>16</sup> The Koreans learned from this experience that the Soviets would not hesitate to fire on an unarmed civilian airliner and that, if the plane managed to land, all passengers and crew would probably eventually be released.

In light of the 1978 experience, Captain Chun could reasonably believe that any plane flying over Soviet airspace would be at risk, any pilot ignoring warnings by Soviet authorities to land would most assuredly be placing his plane at risk, and that the passengers' chances of survival and

safe passage improved markedly once the plane was safely on the ground. Knowing this, it seems highly unlikely that both Captain Chun and his copilot would have ignored Soviet warnings HAD THEY BEEN GIVEN.

Put simply, both the Korean pilot and his copilot knew that the risk of destruction to the plane and death to its passengers and crew was far greater by ignoring Soviet warnings and continuing the flight than by acceding to demands and landing the plane at a Soviet airfield. Therefore, it is difficult to accept the second assumption, that the Koreans ignored Soviet warnings.

Option number one--the Soviet version--is just not credible. That they warned the intruder over Kamchatka and that, when these warnings were ignored, the Soviets CHOSE to allow the flight to continue has been shown to be highly unlikely. Why then did the flight continue on out to international waters?

2. The Soviets were aware of the flight but chose to do nothing in response to it.

Upon first consideration, this option seems quite improbable. To accept this argument, one must accept that the Soviets would knowingly allow a foreign aircraft over one of their sensitive military installations. However, this option cannot immediately be dismissed; there are two separate theories supporting it.

Among the reasons put forward that the Korean airliner was over Soviet airspace in the first place, was speculation



that Korean pilots flying from Anchorage would sometimes deviate from international routes and fly over Soviet territory on what is known as the "Great Circle Route," the most direct route to Seoul. Although this has not been proven, Major-General Rohmer points out that, "It was reported by Associated Press that on Friday, February 17, 1984, a Korean Air Lines official had confirmed--'admitted' might be a better word--that KAL had shifted at least ten veteran pilots to ground duties." General Rohmer adds that this came as a result of an investigation following the KAL-007 incident and intensified after a Korean airliner collided with a private plane in Anchorage shortly afterward. General Rohmer then asks, "Why did the airline take such a harsh step in grounding [them]?" He speculates that flying the Great Circle Route could have been the reason. "The casual links between Flight 007's presence over Soviet territory, the investigation and the grounding of the pilots are direct and impossible to ignore."<sup>19</sup>

It is exceptionally difficult for students of Soviet policy to embrace this argument. I am not aware of any circumstance when the Soviet Union has tolerated this type of overflight of its borders. Dr. Tarasulo agrees that this theory is unreasonable, pointing out that the precedent set by the downing of the Korean airliner over the Kola peninsula in 1978 makes regular unauthorized overflights even more unlikely.<sup>20</sup>

However, if other planes had, indeed, passed over

Soviet territory without incident, and if we give the Soviets the benefit of the doubt by assuming they CHOSE not to do anything about these violations (rather than assuming they were UNABLE to do anything about them), then an explanation can be tendered as to why they were tolerated. Aeroflot, the Soviet state airline with commercial flights throughout the world, often deviates from its normal flight routes to pass over Western military bases and other sensitive areas. This happened at least sixteen times in 1981 and 1982, when Aeroflot was flying into Dulles International Airport in Washington, D.C. Other Eastern Bloc airlines make similar diversions.<sup>21</sup> The existence of a gentlemen's agreement between the Soviets and Americans to leave each other's aircraft alone would explain why the Soviets allow this activity to continue.

This "gentlemen's agreement" theory is refuted by the fact that the United States has gone on record protesting unauthorized overflights by Aeroflot planes. After an incident in 1981 the U.S. even temporarily suspended Aeroflot flights to this country in protest.<sup>22</sup>

All evidence supporting this position, so far, is circumstantial. No proof has ever been made public that Korean pilots habitually overflew the Soviet Union or that any type of gentlemen's agreement has ever existed.

A second, perhaps more likely reason that the Soviets could have allowed KAL-007 to transgress Kamchatka without incident is postulated by a researcher for the U.S. State

Department and former technical editor of Israel's Air Force magazine, Yossef Bodansky. Mr. Bodansky asserts that, although the Soviets had decided to destroy the intruder, they determined that doing so over Kamchatka would compromise their air defense capabilities over a classified area at an extremely sensitive time. "...had the Soviets decided to shoot down the KAL Boeing 747 above Kamchatka, they would have exposed their local radiotechnical means and their modes of operation. This would have exposed the relationship between the ABM radars and the SA-5s (surface-to-air missiles).<sup>23</sup>

For whatever reasons the Soviets might allow overflights of their territory, sufficient support for this option exists to make it a credible explanation of events over Kamchatka on 1 September.

3. The Soviets were unable to destroy the Korean jet because they were unaware of its presence.

In presenting his argument as to why the Soviets could not have misidentified the KAL Boeing 747, a former Soviet radar technician now in the West implies that it goes without question that the Soviets knew the intruder was there. His opinion is that the plane should have been identified correctly. This can be expanded to say that the plane should have been observed.<sup>17</sup> Likewise, all American defense analysts interviewed after the occurrence, commented on the quality of reaction from the Soviets, but none suggested that the flight may have gone on unobserved by

them.<sup>18</sup>

There is no reason to believe that the Soviets were unaware of KAL-007's presence on that fateful morning.

4. The Soviets tried to destroy the Korean flight, but were unable to do so.

When Western newspapers began reporting the Korean Air Lines disaster, several interviews were made with US dignitaries and defense analysts. Many were of the opinion that Soviet Air Defense reacted to the Korean plane over Kamchatka, but responded so poorly that KAL-007 was already over the Sea of Okhotsk before anything could be accomplished. The general feeling seemed to be that Soviet fighters sent in reaction were unsuccessful in locating the plane. US Air Force Chief of Staff General Gabriel expressed a view shared by others that the Soviet air defense system was quite inept. Ran Corporation analyst Edward Warner supported this view, adding that the Soviet air defense net "behaved just exactly the way one would expect it to work, the way it behaves during exercises." MIT Professor Meyer corroborated this, saying he was not surprised that the Soviet pilots couldn't find the target, based on their air defense exercises and critical essays in their own literature.<sup>24</sup>

Viktor Belenko, the former Soviet pilot, gives his opinion of what happened:

A secret standing order, issued by the Soviet Ministry of Defense, dictates that once an alien aircraft ventures into Soviet airspace, it must not be allowed to escape. Soviet pilots are supposed to fly ahead of the foreign plane, attract attention by firing tracers, rocking their wings

and, if it is dark, by flashing their navigation lights. If the foreign plane does not signal willingness to follow the interceptors, then Soviet pilots are to shoot it down.

Thus, as KAL 007, now disastrously off course, came within 25 kilometres of Kamchatka, local commanders launched interceptors. But the Soviet fighters failed to catch KAL 007. They did not even come close enough to warn the airliner. Perhaps the ground commander was slow in scrambling his planes. Perhaps ground controllers were inept in vectoring them. Whatever, the standing order was unfulfilled; an unauthorized aircraft had transgressed Soviet airspace and had been allowed to escape.<sup>25</sup>

On the other hand, some analysts felt that the time the airliner was over Kamchatka was spent by the local commander trying to get a decision from above. An editor for the magazine Defense Electronics speculated that the flaw in reaction was due not to the Air Defense system or the hardware, but to the command structure.<sup>26</sup> Former Secretary of State Alexander Haig added that Soviet handling of this affair raised concerns about both their military systems and their command and control.<sup>27</sup>

### Conclusion

Four possible scenarios of the events over Kamchatka have been explored. The Soviet explanation that their fighters intercepted KAL-007 and instructed it to land is not supported by any reasonable argument. There is a chance that the Soviets knowingly allowed KAL-007 to cross their territory without incident, either because it was common practice for Korean pilots to fly this route or for purposes of masking Soviet air defense capabilities, but support for this is based on as yet unproved assertions. If this was the

case, then a question arises as to why the airliner was ultimately destroyed. The possibility that the overflight could have occurred without the Soviets being aware of it is so unlikely that no authoritative support has been put forward in its favor.

The most likely explanation is that Korean Air Lines flight 007 had been reprieved. In the confusion of an unexpected overflight of their territory, the Soviet Air Defense system, or command and control, or both had been unable to react swiftly enough to capture the intruder over Soviet airspace. The plane continued on out to sea, beginning stage two of its final voyage.

#### STAGE TWO: THE SEA OF OKHOTSK

##### An Analysis

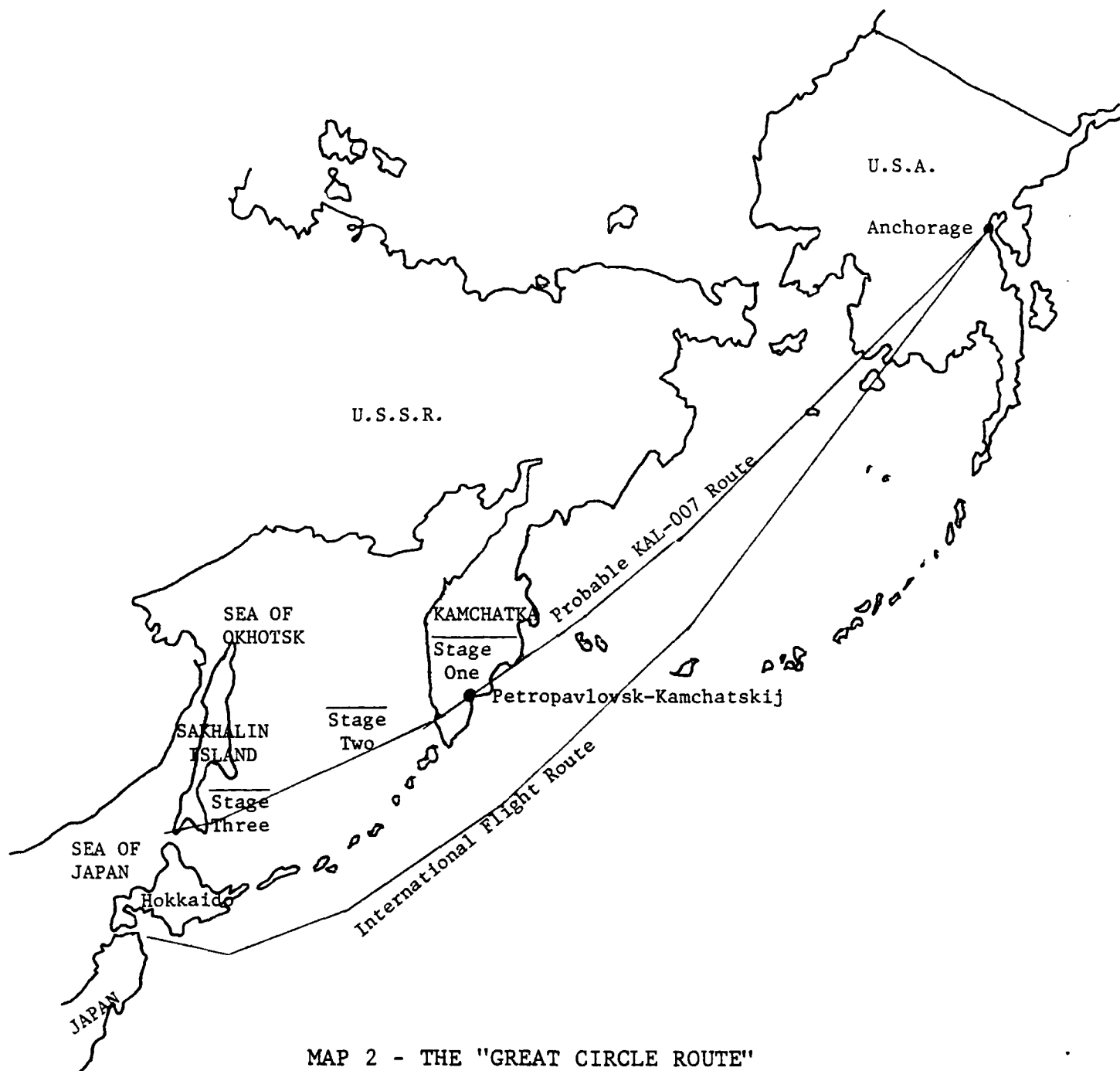
Only two proposals have been put forward as to what happened to KAL-007 over the Sea of Okhotsk: one from the Soviets and one from Major General Rohmer. General Rohmer suggests that almost from the time the plane took off in Anchorage, it was following a heading of 246 degrees--a course which would take it on the most direct route from Anchorage to Seoul--the Great Circle Route. By following a course of 246 degrees, KAL-007 would have entered Kamchatka over the city of Petropavlovsk, or just slightly to the south, and would have left the peninsula at a point near the town of Oktyabr'skij. Continuing without deviation from the 246 degree heading, the Korean jet would fly directly to

Sakhalin Island, pass over the isthmus near the towns of Dolinsk and Sokol, and proceed to an area just west of the island where it was destroyed.<sup>28</sup> (map 2)

This route is the most direct route possible and can be used to determine the plausibility of the more indirect route suggested by the Soviets. By using a speed of 475 miles per hour, the speed needed to make the trip from Anchorage to Seoul in the scheduled seven and one half hours flight time, the approximate flight times over Soviet territory can be surmised. The 200 miles over the Kamchatka peninsula can be covered in just under 30 minutes. From the town of Oktyabr'skij on the southwestern coast to the point west of Sakhalin island where the airliner was shot down is a distance of approximately 750 to 800 miles, about one hour 35 minutes to one hour 45 minutes flight time.

According to the tapes of the final shoot-down, the flight was destroyed at 6:24 A.M. on 1 September. Using the most direct route possible, the Great Circle Route suggested by General Rohmer, the Korean airliner would have been over the west coast of Kamchatka at around 4:45 to 4:55 A.M. and over the city of Petropavlovsk (where the naval base is located) at about 4:15 to 4:25 A.M.

The Soviet version is quite different. Marshal Ogarkov placed the Korean jet over a strategic naval base on Kamchatka (Petropavlovsk) at 15:10 (sic--did he mean 5:10?), reported in Pravda as "5:30." To accept this argument would be to accept that the plane could have flown 900 to 950



MAP 2 - THE "GREAT CIRCLE ROUTE"  
the shortest distance to Seoul



miles from Petropavlovsk to the point of its destruction in less than an hour--twice its normal speed. As difficult as this is to believe, even this calculation understates the speed needed, for it assumes a direct path on a heading of 240 degrees. Ogarkov, however, claims that the route was not direct, but circuitous, insisting that at 6:02 A.M. the pilot executed a sharp (70 degrees) turn toward Sakhalin island.<sup>29</sup>

General Rohmer refutes this assertion by carefully establishing that this would place KAL-007 on a heading of 300 degrees from approximately 6:03 to 6:15 A.M. In fact (according to the tape of the fighter pilot's communications) General Rohmer continues, "At [6:13 A.M.], [the fighter pilot] says, 'I see it. I'm locked on to the target.' This means he is directly behind the 747 and following its same course. Thirty seconds later, he reports, 'The target's course is 240 degrees,' and at [6:15 A.M.], when, in the Ogarkov scenario, the 747 is still flying on the 300-degree course and about to begin its turn to the left, the man who was there in the sky tracking the 747 says, 'The target's course is still the same...240.' Either Marshal [Nikolaj V.] Ogarkov, Chief of the Soviet General Staff, was deliberately lying, or he had been totally misinformed by his staff."<sup>30</sup> The entire route mapped out by Ogarkov, from Kamchatka to Sakhalin, and the times he uses to fix the Korean plane over a particular piece of territory simply do not conform to the interceptor pilot's transmissions, nor to common arithmetic.

Maskirovka, the Soviet practice of camouflage, concealment and deception, could have been the reason for Ogarkov's sophistic explanation. A deliberate muddling, by Ogarkov at his press conference, of the actual times combined with reporting an incorrect course would help confound analysts trying to discover the Soviet Air Defense forces' true reaction to the overflight. The accurate trace of 240 degrees rather than 230 or 300 would not only pinpoint the location of a sensitive military installation, but, more importantly, reveal to Western intelligence vital temporal information that could be combined with data from covert sources to confirm the true nature of the Soviet response. Thus, the Soviets would find it better to use deception and reveal as little as possible.

If Ogarkov's proposed route over the Sea of Okhotsk was a sham, then how valid is the "Great Circle Route" of 246 degrees suggested by General Rohmer? Of course, if it can be proven that the Korean pilot, Chun, chose to take the shortest route, then it is unnecessary to look further. The shortest route is 246 degrees. .

If Captain Chun, on the other hand, was unaware of his true location and believed himself to be much further east on the international air routes, he still would have had no cause to deviate from his accepted heading. Nor did he ever report changes in course to the international air controllers in Alaska and Japan.

Whatever the reason for KAL-007's unfortunate course,

deliberate or not, the time factor strongly indicates that the flight was constant and direct, from the coast of Kamchatka to the Sea of Japan--approximately 240 degrees (246).

#### Conclusion

Ogarkov's interpretation of the flight over the Sea of Okhotsk is designed primarily to deceive for strategic purposes and secondly to create doubt as to the innocent and inadvertant nature of the civilian flight. Despite Ogarkov's clumsy attempts at deception, the doomed KAL-007 was approaching Sakhalin Island and its destruction.

#### STAGE THREE: SAKHALIN ISLAND AND THE SEA OF JAPAN

The matter is of public record; most of the actions are clear. Soviet Su-15 fighters scramble from Dolinsk-Sokol Airbase on Sakhalin Island and are vectored to their target, a civilian airliner, by their ground controllers. The Soviet pilot, identified simply as 805, closes in for the kill:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Transmission</u>
06:23	The target's altitude is 10,000 meters (32,808 feet) ... From me it is located 70 degrees to the left... I'm dropping back. Now I will try a rocket.
06:24	Roger, I am in lock-on.
06:25	I am closing on the target, am in lock-on. Distance to target is eight Kilometers (five miles)... I have already switched it on... Z.G. (Missile warheads locked on).
06:26	I have executed the launch... The target is destroyed ... I am breaking off the attack. <sup>31</sup>

With those words the flight of Korean Air Lines 007 became

history.

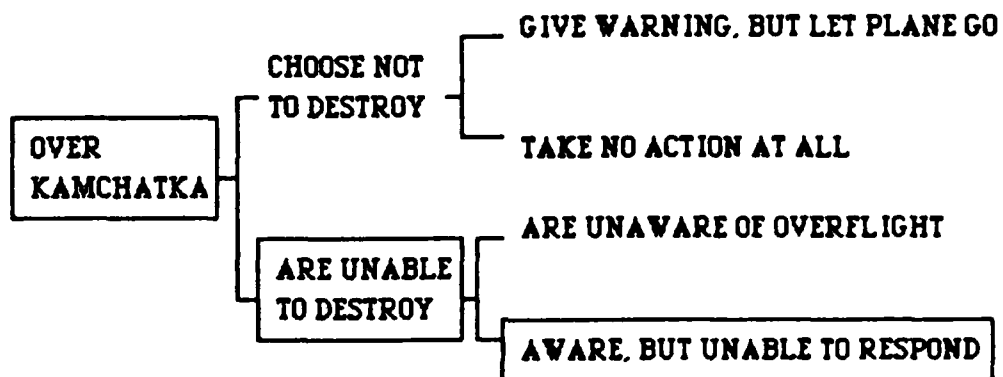
#### SUMMARY

By bringing together the conclusions from stages one and two and adding the information from stage three, a clear scenario unfolds. Korean Air Lines 007 diverts from its normal Anchorage-Seoul route and enters Soviet airspace. Soviet defense radar sites report the violation, initiating the normal fighter reaction to an intrusion.

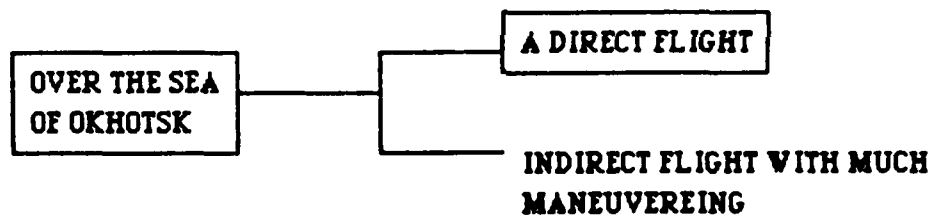
The local sites begin communications with the next higher echelon, and so forth, until all relevant levels are briefed on the situation. A visual identification, if it comes at all, is based on the reports of fighter pilots who do not approach close enough for the Korean pilot to see them.

Before a decision on how to respond can be made, the civilian airliner leaves Soviet airspace. During its flight over the Sea of Okhotsk, the plane's fate is decided; the interloper over Kamchatka thus becomes the doomed over Sakhalin. There is no longer any need for cautious reaction, only a requirement to carry out military procedure. Fighters are once again sent in reaction, this time over Sakhalin Island. The mission is clear. No further identification need be made. The order is given and the intruder destroyed.

### STAGE ONE



### STAGE TWO



### STAGE THREE



FIGURE 4--THE EVENTS AS THEY PROBABLY OCCURRED  
ON 1 SEPTEMBER 1983

## CHAPTER 3

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Translated by researcher.

<sup>2</sup>"Press Conference in Moscow," Pravda, 10 September 1983, p.4, translated by researcher. All readings in text will be from the version of Ogarkov's press conference published in Pravda. Occassionally this differs from the translation published in the New York Times (hereafter identified as "NYT"); these differences will be footnoted.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. NYT calls it an "American aircraft" rather than a reconnaissance aircraft.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. NYT reports the plane was flying over a strategic naval base at 1510.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid. According to NYT, the interceptor was ordered to end the flight using heat-tracing missiles.

<sup>8</sup>"Soviet Fighter Pilots' Remarks on Television," The New York Times, 11 September 1983.

<sup>9</sup>Jim Bussert, "Soviet Air Defense Systems Show Increasing Sophistication," Defense Electronics, 16/5 (May 1984): 75-86.

<sup>10</sup>Rohmer, p.80.

<sup>11</sup>John Barron, MiG Pilot (New York: Avon Books, 1981) p.108.

<sup>12</sup>Belenko, "What Really Happened." p.30.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Rohmer, p.83.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p.25.

<sup>16</sup>Steve Lohr, "Pilot in the '78 Incident Recalls His Experience," The New York Times, 9 September 1983.

- <sup>17</sup>Tarasulo, "Is Soviet Radar Really That Bad?"
- <sup>18</sup>Charles Doe, "Airline Tragedy Shows Soviet Shortcomings," Air Force Times, 24 October 1983, pp.23-25.
- <sup>19</sup>Rohmer, pp.211-212.
- <sup>20</sup>Interview with Dr. Tarasulo, as reported in a personal letter from Dennis Everett, March 1985.
- <sup>21</sup>Rohmer, p.205.
- <sup>22</sup>UN Chronicle, November 1983, p.23.
- <sup>23</sup>Yossef Bodansky, "Death By the Book," Air Force Magazine, December 1983.
- <sup>24</sup>Doe, "Airline Tragedy Shows Soviet Shortcomings."
- <sup>25</sup>Belenko, "What Really Happened."
- <sup>26</sup>Bill Groves, "Charlie and KAL-007--Charlie Got There First," Defense Electronics, 15/11, November 1983, p.11.
- <sup>27</sup>"Soviet Su-15 Shoots Down Korean 747," Aviation Week & Space Technology, 119/10, 5 September 1983, pp.25-27. Hereafter referred to as "Transcript."
- <sup>28</sup>Rohmer.
- <sup>29</sup>"Press Conference."
- <sup>30</sup>Rohmer, p.87.
- <sup>31</sup>"Transcript."

## CHAPTER 4

### THE OTHER QUESTIONS

"The realities of our anxiety-ridden world crammed with nuclear missiles imperatively demand that each and every spy plane that intrudes in Soviet airspace be destroyed."<sup>1</sup>  
--Professor Nikolaj Yakovlev, September 1983

Having established the most probable sequence of events for the morning of 1 September, this thesis now proposes to seek some of the reasons the Soviets decided to destroy KAL-007. Did they believe, as they said, that they were dealing with some type of spy plane? Did they know it was a civilian airliner? Would that knowledge have changed the way they responded?

Section one of this chapter presents arguments on these questions. Section two examines the decision itself and identifies four possible levels of decision making. The level of decision making responsible for the act is established. Section three follows the personalities involved, their roles in the affair and their lives following it. A synthesis of information derived in this chapter will provide a reasonable understanding of the tenor of events on the morning in question.



## SECTION ONE: IDENTIFICATION OF THE INTRUDER

Probably the fiercest battle fought between East and West in the war for international support centers on the question of whom the Soviets thought they were firing upon.

### The Soviet Story

The Soviet version of events changed greatly throughout the days following the action. The first official acknowledgment that something had happened came in Pravda on 2 September and stated simply that an "aircraft of undetermined origin [had] entered the airspace of the Soviet Union from the Pacific Ocean over the Kamchatka peninsula, then violated USSR airspace for a second time over Sakhalin Island... and [then] continued its flight towards the Sea of Japan."<sup>2</sup> Although more details were published about the conduct of the flight and the Soviet military reaction to it, the only suggestions concerning the plane's identity implied that the plane must have been part of a spy operation and that it was probably a civilian airliner.

On 5 September, Colonel General Romanov's article appeared in Pravda, arguing the Soviet case that their pilot had no way of knowing that the intruder was a civilian aircraft. Romanov added that the contours of the plane "resembled the American RC-135 reconnaissance plane."<sup>3</sup> On 6 September the Soviets admitted that the flight had been stopped by their Air Defense Forces and openly asserted that the plane had been on a spy mission, but still did not commit themselves on the identity.<sup>4</sup>

Not until Ogarkov's press conference on 9 September did the complete story, as the Soviets viewed it, emerge. The Soviets now admitted that the plane was a Korean civilian airliner, but asserted that it was on a spy mission for the United States intelligence services. Its rendezvous with an American RC-135 at 5:00 A.M. for approximately ten minutes convinced the Soviets that an "American airplane was entering Soviet airspace." The Soviets claimed it ignored all of their warnings and even transmitted short regular signals while over Kamchatka, confirming to them that it was on a spy mission.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, by 9 September, the Soviets had determined what they would tell the world concerning their perception of the plane and its mission. But what did they actually know on the morning of 1 September?

#### An Analysis

The Soviet position evolved over a period of days before and immediately after they acknowledged terminating the flight, and therefore portrays a changing view. Because the version is inconsistent, their official statements will have to be set aside for the moment.

The first people to have an opportunity to identify KAL-007 were the radar technicians on the Pacific coast as the plane was approaching Soviet territory. A former radar technician himself, Dr. Yitzhak Tarasulo, maintains that a radar operator would have taken into account the route of the intruding aircraft and its shape. The flight patterns of

reconnaissance planes, Tarasulo argues, are well known to Soviet operators. If a plane such as the RC-135 were to violate Soviet airspace it could be expected to do so only on the fringes and to carry out complicated avoidance maneuvers. Such was not the case with the KAL flight. As has been pointed out in chapter three, it flew deep into Soviet airspace, probably in a straight line. With the exception of one early change in altitude and one immediately before being fired upon, the flight also maintained a constant altitude.<sup>6</sup>

Tarasulo insists that the geometric shape and physical size of a Boeing 747, like the Korean airliner, produces a much different radar reflection from that of a Boeing 707, the basic RC-135. This reflection would have been monitored not simply by one technician, but by several from the 50 to 60 radar sites available along the Pacific coast. It is highly unlikely that all could have made the same mistake.<sup>7</sup> Viktor Belenko agrees with this assessment, adding that radar operators would realize the KAL plane was flying much faster (approximately 125 knots greater) than could the RC-135, heavily laden with electronic gear.<sup>8</sup>

Doubt can even be found in the official Soviet statements. When Marshal Ogarkov outlined the Soviet response over Kamchatka, he said that the facts led Soviet air defense technicians to believe the plane was American. The Pravda transcript of his press conference, however, changed the word "American" to "reconnaissance."

Further doubt is cast on the Soviet version even if

it is initially accepted at face value. If Soviet fighters escorted the Korean airliner over Kamchatka and were close enough to warn it visually, as asserted by Marshal Ogarkov, then certainly Colonel General Romanov's statement of 5 September that the Soviet pilot over Sakhalin didn't know the plane was commercial and that it had the contours of an RC-135, shows either: (1) that Romanov was deliberately lying, (2) that he simply did not know, or (3) that Marshal Ogarkov was lying when he stated Soviet fighters had escorted the plane. Both options one and three are probably correct.

On the other hand, evidence exists that, by the time the plane had reached Sakhalin, the Soviets were convinced as to the mission, if not the identity, of the intruder. The transcript of the Soviet interception of KAL-007 reveals no attempt by the Soviet fighter pilot to identify his target, indicating that the fate of the intruder, regardless of identity, had been decided.<sup>9</sup> Belenko, reminding his readers of the punishment suffered by commanders who allowed the Korean airliner in 1978 to fly over Soviet territory for 90 minutes, speculates, "Now the National Command Center was aware that Soviet air defenses at Kamchatka had failed again. I suspect the commanders at the center reasoned that the risks of killing were less than those of embarrassing the Politburo anew."<sup>10</sup>

Thus, a picture emerges. Confusion reigns over Kamchatka. Perhaps some radar operators correctly identify the intruder as a civilian airliner, maybe others report it

to be a reconnaissance plane, but most probably report the facts: that an unidentified plane is approaching Soviet territory. Fighters sent in reaction fail to make visual contact, as has been supported earlier in this thesis, and the intruder flies on. Doubts remain as to the type of plane violating Soviet airspace, but there are no doubts about two things: the trespass is illegal and the flight path has taken it over a sensitive military installation.

As the plane approaches Sakhalin Island its identity has become unimportant. Even the debate, if there was one, of the plane's mission, becomes of secondary interest. Important now, is that the Soviet decision maker is about to receive a second chance to act. No further delay in terminating the flight can be tolerated. Military procedure is clear. KAL-007 must be stopped!

#### Conclusion

As the intruder flew over Kamchatka the Soviets were probably perplexed as to its identity, but by the time the order was given for its destruction, they had incorrectly deduced that the mission of the aircraft was probably reconnaissance. Even so, the Sakhalin pilot was given no order to identify the plane, because, by this point, there was no need. Nor was he told what he was intercepting, so he would never know that the plane may have been misidentified. As Viktor Belenko states, "Throughout his career, a Soviet pilot is taught: You may not think. You may not recommend. You may not judge. You may only execute. Your commander

will think for you. The pilot, of course, does think to himself: I must do exactly as I am told. I must execute perfectly. If not, I and my family will be ruined."<sup>11</sup>

## SECTION TWO: WHO MADE THE DECISION?

At some point in his research, everyone putting forth an hypothesis on the Soviet response in this matter must postulate an answer to the question, "who made the decision?" All too often this is as futile as tilting at windmills, for no definitive evidence has yet been published naming the person responsible. As an unidentified U.S. official put it, "[this question] plumbs the depth of U.S. intelligence capabilities, and may never be made public, even if it can be determined."<sup>12</sup>

### Introduction

As the Soviet Union guards its secrets jealously, many of the people involved in the incident have never been revealed. Indeed, skeptics would question whether the man identified as the pilot and interviewed on Soviet television following the incident had ever flown a plane. Could he not have been a KGB agent brought in for the purpose?

Because of this inherent doubt, any answer must be based on position rather than personality. In the final analysis, which is more important? That Major Vasilij Konstantinovich Kazmin shot the plane down, or that a Soviet pilot did? That Marshal Petr Kirsanov gave the order, or that the theater commander did? In both cases, of course,

the latter is more important.

This section examines four levels of authority; all include some personalities. An attempt to establish responsibility for the action at one of the four levels will be made and, if possible, an individual named. These four levels are: 1) the national political level--comprising the civilian leaders of the country and all members of the Politburo, including General Secretary Andropov, Foreign Minister Gromyko, and Defense Minister Ustinov (see figure five); 2) the national military level--to include any military authority at the national command in Moscow, as well as the Chief of Soviet Air Defense Troops, Koldunov; his Chief of Main Staff, Romanov; and Chief of the Soviet General Staff, Ogarkov; 3) the local air defense commander--to include all levels of military command up through theater, but not the national level; and 4) the pilot--the Su-15 pilot who actually fired the missiles that destroyed the Korean jet.

#### Level One: The Politburo

The decision to shoot was not made by the Politburo. Two conjunctures support this assertion. First, time constraints probably prevented Members of the Politburo from learning about the events of 1 September until after they had occurred. Second, even if its members had known about the flight, a Politburo acting without consensus and within such strict time constraints would have been unable to do much more than concur with procedures being followed by the

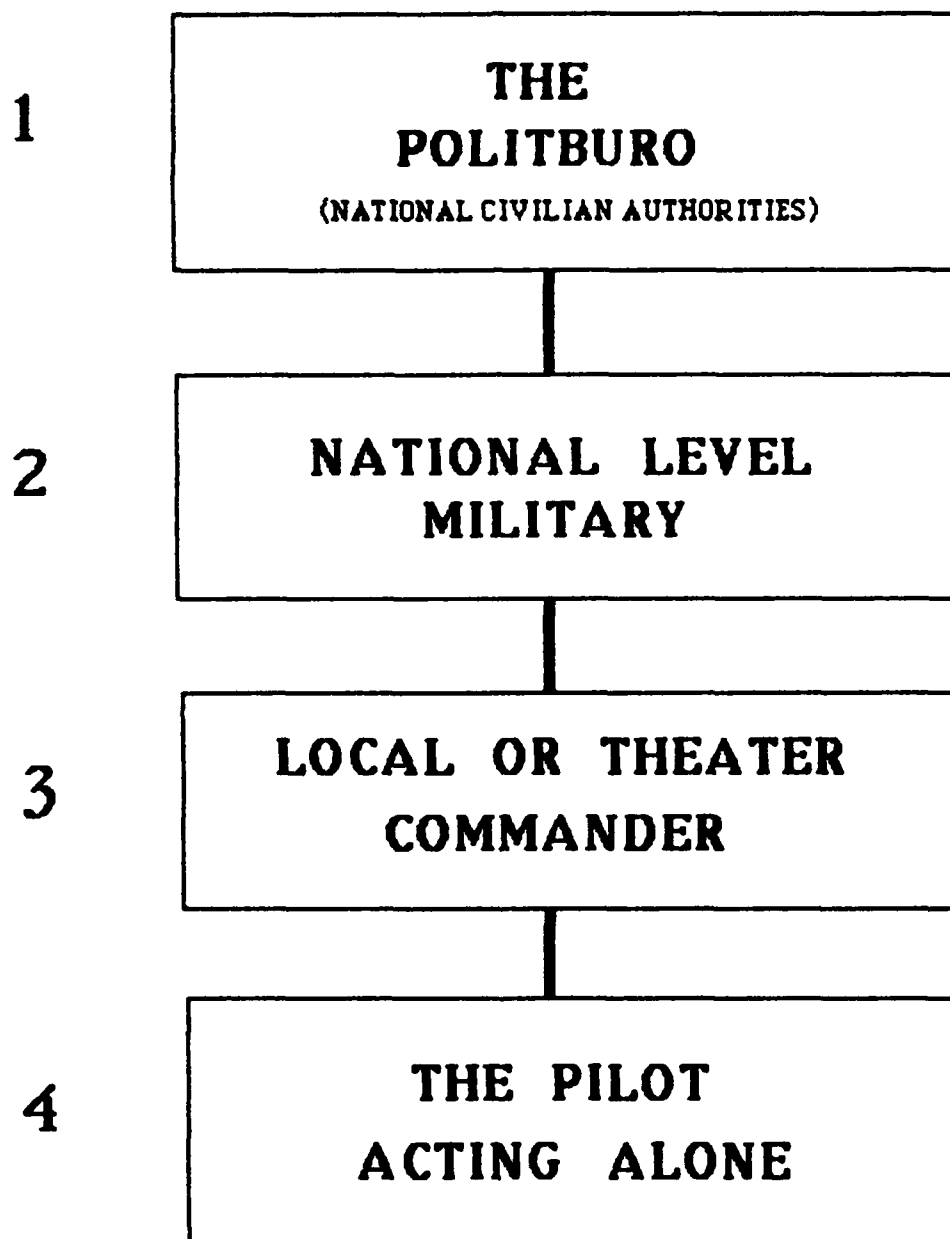


FIGURE 5 -- THE FOUR LEVELS OF DECISIONMAKING



military.

The amount of time available for key members of the Politburo to learn of the incident and make a decision was short--two hours at the most. Given such time constraints, information received by the national military authorities would need to have been passed immediately to the Moscow-based members of the Politburo for a decision to have been made. There are indications that such was probably not the case.

That no one in the Politburo knew about the events until after the fact is borne out by the strange method in which international queries and protests were handled during this time. Usually a conflict, whether advertant or inadvertant, between two nations at peace is handled at the diplomatic and Foreign Ministry level (U.S. State Department). When it involves two governments not having diplomatic relations, such as South Korea and the USSR, a third nation acts as intermediary.

After the disappearance of the Korean jet, the United States, acting on behalf of Korea, queried the Soviet Union through diplomatic channels. The Soviet reply with neither the belligerent accusation that could be expected if the incident had been intended to provoke, nor the formal statement normally given that is meant to ease tensions without acknowledging guilt. The Soviets replied that they knew nothing about the plane. It appeared that the Soviet Foreign Ministry was unaware of the details of the incident.

At this time the Politburo had probably not been briefed on the incident by the military.

If the Politburo had been kept informed, however, on all events that Sunday night, the lack of time would have made a decision by them very difficult to achieve. Arkady Shevchenko describes the process the Politburo uses to make decisions when not in session. "...emergency issues... are then handled by... a poll of the resident Moscow leadership, often excluding the out-of-town members. Central Committee couriers bring the papers to the Politburo members and wait while they write out their approval or comments in the margin. For these polled questions a majority of the Moscow members is enough to ensure collective responsibility."<sup>13</sup> Whether military crises are handled in the same way, one can only speculate. "Collective responsibility," however, is probably still considered important. In the KAL incident, an immediate consensus or even majority required to assure collective responsibility was unlikely.

In the days that followed the shoot-down, Soviet public reaction came only from members of the press corps and the military. The Foreign Ministry remained unusually silent. Foreign Minister Gromyko only commented on the incident when cornered, as when he lashed out at Secretary of State Schultz during their meeting in Madrid shortly afterward. As Arkady Shevchenko noted, "Gromyko could have had very little to do with the decision to shoot down the plane and I am sure he would have had little patience with

such a plan. He is much too shrewd and experienced to make his country the butt of the world's opprobrium by encouraging bully tactics."<sup>14</sup> Objections from a senior member of the Politburo like Gromyko could not be ignored, nor was it likely that he could have been dissuaded of his opinion in such a short span of time as was available. The consensus would not have been achieved in two hours.

The most prominent of Politburo members, General Secretary Andropov, was vacationing in the Caucasus at the time of the incident. This factor adds another uncertainty to whether the necessary decision could have been reached. If, despite this evidence to the contrary, a decision was indeed made, one can turn to an accepted decision-making model to determine what steps the Politburo would have taken.

Graham T. Allison proffers three factors which influence Soviet decision making: (1) rational policy, (2) organizational process, and (3) bureaucratic politics.<sup>15</sup> Organizational process involves action according to procedure, which in this case would be taken by the military. Bureaucratic politics demands a greater amount of time than available in this particular instance for a decision to be made. Rational policy involves an examination of the risks involved and a comparison of cost against benefit.

Given General Secretary Andropov's indisposition, Foreign Minister Gromyko's probable hostility to taking such action, the very short time needed to make a decision, and a host of smaller though no less important considerations (such

as the fact that this occurred late Sunday evening, Moscow time), rational policy, when applied to the Politburo, would yield one of two decisions: that the plane be allowed to escape or that events should simply take course without Politburo involvement. Ordering the downing of foreign airliner without support from key members of the Politburo would be risky. The consequences would be great and would probably overshadow problems arising from allowing the plane to escape. A far safer decision would be not to decide. A military procedure to deal with such intrusions exist-- follow it.

The outcome of events on 1 September is known--the plane was shot down. Based on the argument given above, this indicates that the Politburo made no decision or, if it did, that its decision was not to interfere but to allow events run their course.

The conclusion can therefore be drawn that the Politburo made no decision regarding the fate of Korean Air Lines 007 or, if it did, decided not to interfere with the military's handling of events.

Level Two: The National Military Command

The decision to shoot was probably not made by the national military command. In order to determine the validity of this statement we must first establish what information was available to military authorities in Moscow and which officers would have been directly involved in the matter. Only then can a conclusion be drawn as to the level

of participation of the national military command.

There is ample evidence to show that national military authorities were aware of the events as they were taking place. Based on his experience as a Soviet radar technician, Doctor Tarasulo asserts that an air defense "readiness one" should have been declared by Far Eastern Air Defense in Khabarovsk within five minutes of recognition of a border violation. Within the next five minutes the Central Command Post of the Soviet Air Defence Forces should have gathered enough information to bring the General Staff of the Soviet Army into action.<sup>16</sup>

Lieutenant Belenko agrees that the national level would have been brought into the picture early. "Whenever radar screens reveal an unidentified aircraft within 100 kilometres of Soviet borders, its position is immediately reported to the National Command Center at Kalinin, northwest of Moscow. So long as the aircraft remains in the 100-kilometre zone, its course, speed and altitude are shown on a screen at Kalinin, where a general officer is always on duty."<sup>17</sup>

In addition, some data released by the US Defense Intelligence Agency reveal that national authorities were consulted before the order was given.<sup>18</sup> It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that the military powers in Moscow were aware of the overflight.

Of the officers who could have been involved in the decision, three men stand out: the Chief of the General

Staff, Marshal Ogarkov; the Chief of the Air Defense Forces, Marshal Koldunov; and Koldunov's Chief of Staff, Colonel General Romanov. Each made public statements following the incident and each was assigned a role in the decision by various members of the Western press.

Marshal Ogarkov, as Chief of the General Staff, was the only military officer besides the Minister of Defense who had the authority to override a decision by the Theater Commander. (Theater authority and chain of command are discussed in the next section of this chapter.) The Theater Air Defense Commander was made directly subordinate to the Theater Commander and thence to Marshal Ogarkov in a reorganization completed in December, 1982. This reorganization removed the Chief of Air Defense Forces, Marshal of Aviation Koldunov, from direct involvement in operational decisions. In other words, Koldunov owned the troops, but the Theater Command directed them. This reorganization not only makes Koldunov's participation in the decision unlikely, but also the participation of his Chief of Staff, Romanov. Therefore, Ogarkov is the most likely person at national level to have made the decision.

Marshal Ogarkov was privy to information not necessarily available to lower echelons. He knew, for instance, that no reconnaissance gear was found aboard the Korean airliner forced to land in 1978. He was also aware that, with the advent of spy satellites, routine photography from aircraft was probably an unnecessary risk. The value of

airplanes flown over hostile territory lay in provoking the defense network to respond, and this response over Kamchatka had been negligible--the flight was a failure if provocation had been its purpose. Finally, Ogarkov should have known what few at lower levels could be certain of: that, unlike the Soviets, Western governments do not use their civilian airliners for espionage.

Besides these considerations, Ogarkov would have appreciated the political implications of the action. He may have realized, for instance, that a decision to shoot down a foreign commercial airliner could result in embarrassment for the political leaders of his country. He could also guess that the Politburo would be divided on how to handle the situation. He surely realized that if someone in a lesser position than his own made the decision to shoot, the Politburo would view it as a military decision. However, should he, as the Chief of the General Staff, make that same decision, it could be read as political, a challenge to the authority of the Politburo. Historically, the Politburo takes a dim view of military challenges to its authority and, historically, no such challenge has ever succeeded. Had Ogarkov made a decision on the matter, he would have taken these factors into account.

The time constraints and the three principles of decision making mentioned as considerations for the Politburo would have affected Ogarkov's actions as well. It is possible that no information reached Ogarkov in time for him

to make the decision; he could have learned about the situation afterwards. On the other hand, if he was aware of developments, an attempt can be made to determine his role.

Organizational process normally guides the military. In his press conference, Ogarkov stated that the decision was made by a regional commander and that "Soviet Air Defense Forces operated in full contact with the Government's authorities." (It is interesting to note that Pravda corrected his comment to read, "Soviet Air Defence acted in accordance with the State Border law of the USSR.")<sup>19</sup> In Ogarkov's own words, he needed to do nothing. He could either have observed events and merely noted the conduct of the reaction as it took place, or he could have agreed with decisions already made at lower levels.

The principle of rational policy leads to a similar conclusion: it is safest to handle the matter according to established procedures. Moreover, had Ogarkov decided to override the lower commander's decision, the result of events would probably have been different. Given Ogarkov's experience and knowledge of political considerations, least risk would be incurred by forcing the plane down rather than destroying it. Therefore, Ogarkov probably did not make the decision. If he was involved, he probably simply concurred with the actions of subordinate commanders and did not interfere directly.

Nevertheless, two arguments have been presented to indicate that Ogarkov made the decision. Both are flawed.



The first is that, having made the decision, Ogarkov found it necessary to conduct the press conference to get himself off the hook and to justify his own action. The second is that he was stripped of his position as Chief of Staff because he made the decision concerning the Korean airliner.

As regards the press conference, Ogarkov, as Chief of Staff, would have been responsible for any decision made by military authorities, not merely his own. The press conference could have been called simply to ease pressure off the military instead of Marshal Ogarkov, himself. His participation in the press conference proves nothing concerning the KAL decision.

Just as faulty an argument is that he was removed from office because he made the decision to shoot. Ogarkov was involved in many things, as has been noted above. Had he seriously challenged civilian authority by ordering the downing of KAL-007, punishment would probably have been much harsher. As it was, the move was an orderly transfer of position from him to his trusted lieutenant, Marshal Akhromeev. There was no other shake-up involved. Indeed, when Defense Minister Ustinov (basically a civilian, despite his rank of Marshal) died, the Politburo replaced him with Marshal Sokolov, a career military officer. The Korean airlines incident probably had little to do with Ogarkov's fall from power.

In summary, the decision was probably not made at the national military level. Marshal Ogarkov, if involved at

all, would most likely have accepted the actions of subordinate commanders.

Level Three: Theater Military Commander

The decision was probably made at this level. As has been shown, the decision to end the flight of Korean Air Lines 007 was a military one, not a political one. Moreover, when considered in strictly military terms, it was reasonable, given the sensitive missile testing going on at the time.

After claiming that the decision had been made by the "regional commander," Marshal Ogarkov was asked by a foreign correspondent if his explanation meant that "the Soviet Union [was] willing to risk war with the United States on the decision of a district commander."<sup>20</sup> Although this question was most probably intended to provoke Ogarkov, part of the Chief of Staff's reply was very telling. "There's a strict order of command and responsibility for actions in such situations in the Soviet Union." What is this "strict order of command and responsibility"?<sup>21</sup>

The Soviet military establishment has undergone a major reorganization in recent years. Coincident with Marshal Ogarkov's doctrinal changes divesting power to Commanders of the Theaters of Military Operations (TVDs) were organizational changes placing the Air Defense Districts of the Air Defense Forces (Vojska PVO, formerly PVO Strany) under the control of Military District (VO) Commanders (themselves under the TVD Commanders).<sup>22</sup>

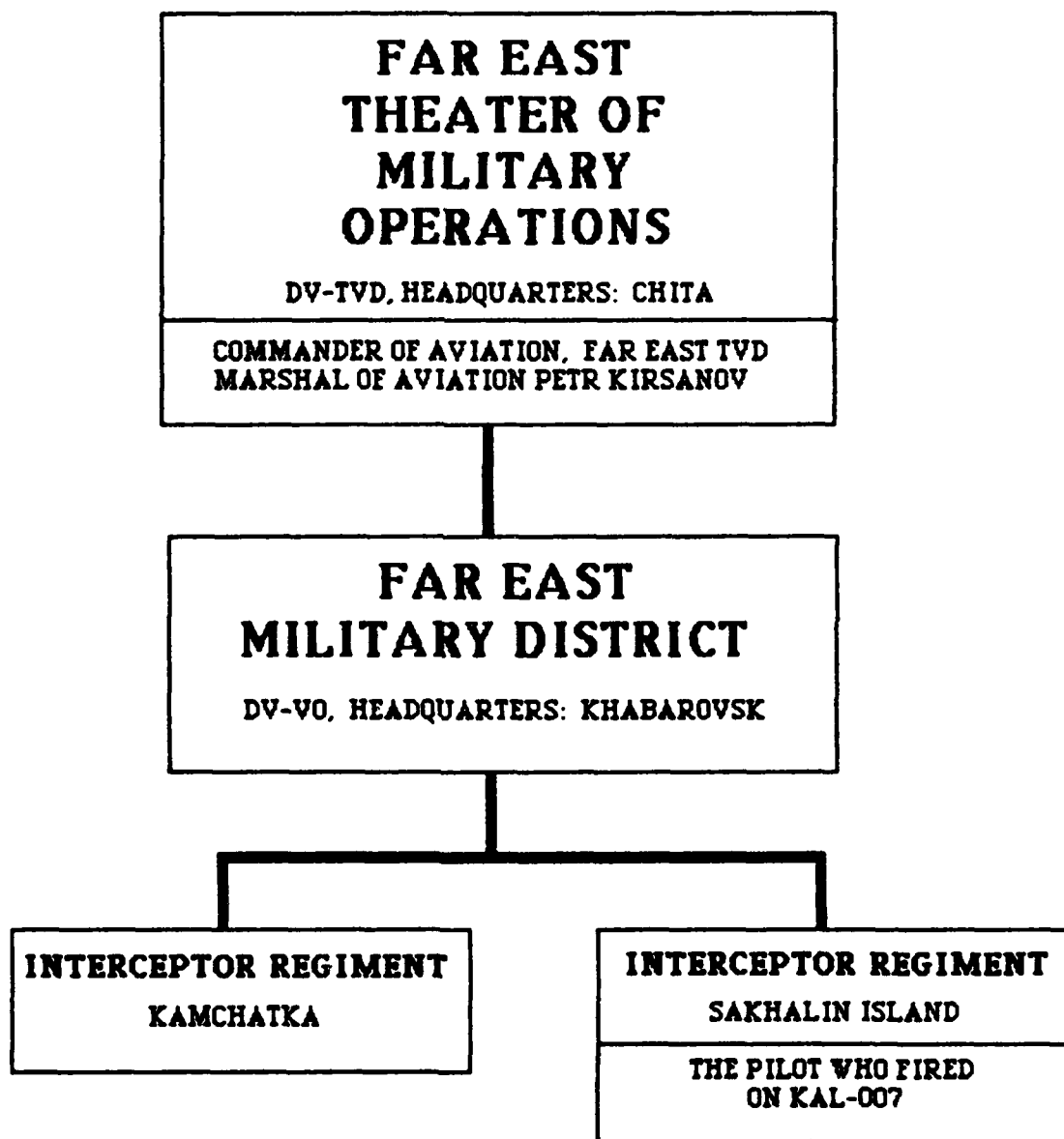


FIGURE 6--CHAIN OF COMMAND, SOVIET FAR EAST

In effect, this delegates control of fighter reaction from Air Defense Headquarters in Moscow to the TVD. "The Aviation Commander of the TVD becomes the direct senior commander for the conduct of Independent Air Operations, both offensive and defensive. He controls/manages the defensive operations in his capacity as the Commander of the Soviet Air Defense Forces of the TVD."<sup>23</sup>

On 1 September 1983 the Commander of Aviation of the Far East Theater of Military Operations was Marshal of Aviation Petr Kirsanov. Kirsanov was kept informed of developments in the situation by local commanders; he was aware of the sensitivity of missile testing in the area; and he was fully briefed on all accompanying considerations. Thus, according to procedure, Kirsanov made a military (vice political) decision, and that decision was to terminate the flight of KAL-007.

#### Level Four: The Pilot

The decision to shoot was not made by the pilot. This researcher has found no source, Soviet or Western, asserting that the pilot acted on his own when he fired at the Korean airliner. The evidence to the contrary overwhelmingly shows that procedure and training in the Soviet Air Defense Forces prevent a pilot from taking such an action.

Recent Soviet articles have encouraged pilots to take more risks and limited initiative, but have never suggested that this should be expanded outside strict guidelines.

Colonel A.B. Krasnov, a leading Soviet air tactician, complains of a pilot who failed to complete an attack when his communications with the ground were interrupted. Krasnov advises pilots to take control of the intercept instead of relying on ground stations. But NOWHERE DOES HE SUGGEST THAT PILOTS INITIATE ACTION ON THEIR OWN. In other words, the initiative and risk-taking referred to by Colonel Krasnov are limited to ways of carrying out a mission, not to deciding what that mission or its results should be.<sup>24</sup>

The tape played for the UN General Assembly provides substantiation that the pilot decided nothing himself, but was only following orders. The pilot requested instructions from the ground station regarding everything, from his course and altitude to turning off his weapons system. In other words, this interception was directed completely by the ground controller at callsign "Deputat." The pilot simply executed Deputat's commands.<sup>25</sup>

One can confidently accept that the pilot did not make the decision, for reasons including, "Russian devotion to [a] system that rewards those who follow the rules."<sup>26</sup>

### Conclusion

The effect of time constraints on the Soviet decision-making process is evident at each level in varying degrees. At the higher levels lack of time resulted in no substantive decision being made which would breach the procedures already put into effect. In retrospect, rational policy might have dictated a less drastic measure than

shooting the plane down. Even this, however, may not have been so obvious at that moment under the pressures of time.

At the lower levels, established procedures were to be followed unless contradicted by orders from above. These orders never came, so the Korean airliner was destroyed according to the rules already established. The decision to shoot was a military decision, made at the proper level (theater) by a commander of responsible rank (Marshal of Aviation).

### SECTION THREE: THE PEOPLE INVOLVED

Where-are-they-now columns serve to boost a magazine's circulation with interesting vignettes of once-powerful men raising chickens in Palo Alto. This section, however, is intended to present information on some of the key Soviets involved in the incident and thereby help the reader understand the consequences of their actions.

#### Yurij Vladimirovich Andropov

The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CC CPSU), Full Member of the Politburo, and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (President) was said to have been vacationing in the Caucasus during the Korean Air Lines incident. Andropov was destined to spend his last days hidden from public view, occasionally issuing statements on policy matters, such as the deployment of U.S. missiles in Europe. He was rumored to have undergone extensive surgery

during the months preceeding his death on 9 February 1984. Andropov's public reaction to KAL-007 was nonexistent. In fact, he probably had very little, if anything, to do with Soviet reaction to the overflight.

Dmitrij Fedorovich Ustinov

Marshal of the Soviet Union, Minister of Defense, and Full Member of the Politburo of the CC CPSU, Ustinov made few statements about the KAL disaster. He remained Minister of Defense in charge of the Soviet Armed Forces until his death, of pneumonia on 27 December 1984.

Nikolaj Vasilievich Ogarkov

Marshal of the Soviet Union, First Deputy Minister of Defense, Chief of the General Staff, Marshal Ogarkov was unarguably the most visible of Soviet personalities during the weeks following the incident. Ogarkov had enjoyed a long and distinguished career in the Soviet Army, culminating in 1977 with his appointment as Chief of the General Staff. His work in modernizing the Soviet Armed Forces and formulating Soviet military doctrine earned him a degree of respect equal to that given Marshal Zhukov, Hero of Stalingrad and the Commander who took Berlin in World War II.

After international pressure forced the Soviets into acknowledging the seriousness of the Korean Air Lines incident, Marshal Ogarkov gained worldwide recognition by conducting an unprecedented no-holds-barred press conference to communicate the Soviet position. Analysts disagree on the reason for the press conference, some maintaining that it was

merely to present the Soviet case to the world, while others, believing the decision to shoot down the Korean plane to have been Ogarkov's alone, suggesting that he was using the opportunity to extricate himself from an onerous situation. Whatever the reason, all acknowledged his skill in handling the foreign press and agreed that, by any measure, the press conference was a success.

On 7 September 1984, Krasnaya Zvezda announced that Ogarkov had been relieved of his duties as Chief of the General Staff and had been transferred to "other work".<sup>27</sup> About a month later, Politburo Member Georgij Romanov, on a visit to Helsinki, confirmed that his "other work" was a position as Commander in Chief of the Western Theater of War.<sup>28</sup>

Since that time Sovietologists have speculated on the reasons for Ogarkov's demotion, some even questioning whether it was, in fact, a demotion. Those who believe it was a step down from his previous position point to various possible causes for his removal, including his role in the KAL-007 reaction. Other analysts believe this "diversification" may have been the result of Ogarkov's considerable activity in arms control; and a few believe it was due to a statement he had made earlier that a nuclear war could be won.

The former Under Secretary General of the United Nations who defected to the United States in 1978, Arkady Shevchenko, believes Ogarkov was dismissed due to his "insistence on military appropriations which the Politburo



considered excessive."<sup>29</sup> Military expenditures could have been the basis for a disagreement Ogarkov was thought to have had with Defense Minister Ustinov over the readiness of Soviet Armed Forces.<sup>30</sup>

Some experts counter that Ogarkov's move may have been a type of promotion (vice demotion) or, at least, a lateral switch to allow him to continue his work on military doctrine. Yossef Bodansky feels that "there is a large-scale disinformation campaign launched by the Soviets to present Ogarkov's reassignment as a politically oriented demotion." In fact, Bodansky continues, Ogarkov was "promoted in line with further pursuit of the course he formulated," i.e. his contribution to Soviet Military Science and the Art of War.<sup>31</sup>

In all likelihood the motive was to remove a strong military personality from the center of power during a potential crisis of command. By September 1984 General Secretary Chernenko was regularly embarrassing the more progressive Soviet bureaucrats who didn't think a national leader should have to be jump-started every morning. Defense Minister Ustinov, himself, was about to goose-step into the world beyond.

Ogarkov's disagreement with Ustinov, which had become more evident after Chernenko took power, might have resulted in an earlier dismissal had the Korean Air Lines incident not happened. "In putting him out front in September 1983 to justify the shooting down of the KAL plane, the political leadership may have wanted to put the onus for the action on

the Soviet Military, but Moscow's insistence on its innocence and Ogarkov's sterling press conference performance may well have served to consolidate his position for some time thereafter.<sup>32</sup> Eventually, however, his power waned and he was transferred.

General Vladimir L. Govorov

Govorov was the commander of troops on Sakhalin Island when the plane was shot down. Referred to as "the guilty General" in the days following the incident, he soon faded into the background as arguments ensued over the details of the flight. Since then, Govorov's career has continued favorably; in August 1984 he was recognized for his role in Soviet-Mongolian joint defense efforts and was presented with the Order of the Red Banner of Combat Glory by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Mongolia.<sup>33</sup> Govorov's efforts in "increasing defense readiness of Soviet troops" earned him the order of Hero of the Soviet Union in November 1984.<sup>34</sup>

General of the Army Govorov is now a Deputy Minister of Defense and Chief Inspector of the Ministry of Defense.<sup>35</sup>

Marshal of Aviation Petr Kirsanov

Kirsanov was Commander of Aviation of the Far East Theater of Military Operations and the person probably responsible for issuing the order to destroy Korean Air Lines flight 007. Kirsanov justified his decision in an article published in Pravda on 20 September 1983, where he asserted that the Korean crew had seen the warnings of the Soviet

pilots but ignored them. In the same article, Marshal Kirsanov pointed out the coincidence of the Korean overflight with American spy satellites overhead during Soviet missile testing activities.<sup>36</sup>

Works by Kirsanov and articles about him have not appeared in any major publication since December 1983, and his whereabouts are unknown to this researcher. This paucity of information does not automatically indicate steps were taken against him as a result of his role in the KAL incident, but such an hypothesis cannot be ruled out. A senior-ranking officer such as Marshal Kirsanov cannot maintain his stature without eventually reappearing. Only time will tell what has become of him.

Chief Marshal of Aviation Aleksandr Ivanovich Koldunov

Koldunov became Commander in Chief of Soviet Air Defense Forces in July 1978, when his predecessor was removed, probably because of events surrounding the botched interception of a Korean airliner over the Kola peninsula. Koldunov, one of the top ten Russian fighter aces in WWII, was twice a "Hero of the Soviet Union." For the most part, he stayed in the background during the KAL incident. Koldunov's 60th birthday fell in September 1983, the month of the shooting, but passed unnoticed. The normal decorations given to high-ranking Soviet officers on major birthdays were skipped for Koldunov this year.

In February 1984 Koldunov published an article, "Guarding Peace and Socialism" in the magazine Selskaya

Zhizn'.<sup>37</sup> A Marshal of Aviation during the events of September 1983, he was promoted to Chief Marshal of Aviation in the Autumn of 1984.<sup>38</sup>

Georgij Kornienko

First Deputy Foreign Minister Kornienko represented the Foreign Ministry at the 9 September press conference. One of two first deputies in the ministry, Kornienko is probably Gromyko's No. 2 man. His latest public assignment was with Gromyko's delegation meeting Secretary of State Schultz in Geneva in January 1985.<sup>39</sup>

Chief Marshal of Aviation Pavel Stepanovich Kutakhov

Commander in Chief of Air Forces and Deputy Minister of Defense from 1969 to 1984, a "Hero of the Soviet Union," Kutakhov was Marshal Kirsanov's immediate administrative supervisor during the KAL incident. Despite this, he probably had little to do with events that night. Kutakhov died 3 December 1984 after a severe and prolonged illness.<sup>40</sup>

Colonel General Semen Romanov

Romanov was Chief of the Main Staff of Air Defense Forces during the KAL incident. He was best known as the General who first suggested the Korean 747 had been mistaken for an American RC-135 reconnaissance aircraft. His article in Pravda led some to suspect that he was embroiled in the controversy concerning events of 1 September, but the extent of his involvement, if any, was never determined. Romanov died in May 1984, "in performance of official duties."<sup>41</sup>

Major Vasilij Konstantinovich Kazmin

This name was given to the pilot (number 805) who fired the missiles that destroyed Korean Air Lines 007. Whether the name is genuine and whether this is the same man who appeared on Soviet television is unclear. The legend built up around this mysterious figure attributes to him a flowing record of 13 years as an interceptor pilot in the Soviet Far East, much of it spent on missions against American RC-135s. Despite his initial fame following the incident, Kazmin has not been noted publicly since.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to determine three things: who the Soviets thought they were firing upon, who made the decision, and what information could be deduced based on the fate of the main players involved.

The confusion caused by Soviet spokesmen over their supposed inability to identify the Korean airliner was probably deliberate; for, in the end, the purpose of Soviet official government and press statements, especially during crises such as this, is not to inform but to manipulate. One need only read a small sampling of "expert" opinions on the incident to see that this manipulation was tremendously successful. The evidence is clear, however, that by the time the decision was made to destroy the Korean intruder, any physical identification was irrelevant. Did they know that the plane was a civilian passenger plane? Probably yes. Did

it matter to the outcome? No--physical appearance is unimportant, the mission of the plane is the key. Did they really believe it was on a spy mission? They were unsure, but it was probably standard procedure to assume worst case when in doubt.

Time pressure was the driving factor in making the decision to shoot the plane down. Lack of time to make a decision generally causes the decision maker to choose the safe approach. For a political body, such as the Politburo, it is usually safe to do nothing. For a highly regimented entity, such as the military, it is safest to follow procedure. Procedure dictates that the flight be stopped. Could the decision have been made by the Politburo? Without a consensus--highly unlikely. Could KAL's fate have been decided at the national military level? Yes, but time constraints and the possible political consequences to such a decision argue against it. The decision seems to have been strictly a military one, made at theater level.

Little can be learned from an examination of the biographies of the players. Colonel General Romanov's death under what could seem to be mysterious circumstances tempts one to draw a comparison with the 1978 incident where heads, literally, rolled. The temptation becomes even greater when one adds Marshal Ogarkov's "demotion" to the equation. The possible disappearance of Marshal Kirsanov, who probably made the decision to shoot, almost makes it difficult to ignore. Yielding to this temptation would be a mistake. Evidence of

Romanov's involvement with the Korean Air Lines incident is circumstantial. Ogarkov's demotion, if it was a demotion, was probably the result of many things, but mostly of a brilliant Chief of Staff pressuring the dull (and military-phobic) bureaucrats of the Politburo once too often. And finally, Kirsanov could appear before the world at any time.

The most striking discovery made in this chapter, and the thread which binds the three questions together, is that given a choice between two theories about Soviet behavior, one flamboyant and imaginative and the other staid and ordinary, the second is more likely to resemble the true Soviet response. In the vernacular of today, the Soviet Union "trucks on."

## CHAPTER 4

### ENDNOTES

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- <sup>5</sup>"Press Conference."
- <sup>6</sup>Tarasulo, "Is Soviet Radar."
- <sup>7</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup>Belenko, "What Really Happened."
- <sup>9</sup>"Transcript."
- <sup>10</sup>Belenko, "What Really Happened."
- <sup>11</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>12</sup>Clarence A. Robinson, Jr. "U.S. Says Soviets Knew Korean Air Lines 747 Was Commercial Flight," Aviation Week & Space Technology, 12 September 1983, p.18.
- <sup>13</sup>Arkady N. Shevchenko, Breaking with Moscow (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), p.179.
- <sup>14</sup>Ibid., p.158.
- <sup>15</sup>As described by Steven J. Cimbala, "Why Did the Soviets Attack the Korean Airliner?"
- <sup>16</sup>Tarasulo, "Is Soviet Radar."
- <sup>17</sup>Belenko, "What Really Happened."
- <sup>18</sup>"Shortcut to Disaster."
- <sup>19</sup>"Press Conference."
- <sup>20</sup>NYT. Of course, this exchange was completely edited out of the Pravda version of the press conference.



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- <sup>23</sup>"30th Air Army--the Soviet Far East Air Force," Jane's Defence Weekly, 9 March 1985, p.406.
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- <sup>25</sup>Pennington, "Tactics Gap."
- <sup>26</sup>"Transcript."
- <sup>27</sup>Groves, "Charlie and KAL-007."
- <sup>28</sup>"News Item," Krasnaya Zvezda, 7 September 1984, p.1.
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- <sup>31</sup>"Possible Antecedents and Implications of Ogarkov's Demotion," Soviet World Outlook, 15 September 1984, p.3.
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## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

From the Soviet perspective, this incident began innocently enough. Border violations, though not particularly common, can be handled by the routine air defense machinery already in place. However, it soon became apparent that this was no routine border violation. The intruder took no steps to alter his course; his flight continued in a straight line deep into Soviet territory, passing over, or at least perilously close to, a sensitive military installation. Simply reporting the plane's movements and reacting locally was no longer appropriate. Guidance from higher echelons was needed.

At theater level, decision makers knew of the missile testing scheduled for around that time and in approximately that place. They probably also were aware that the plane was a civilian airliner. The intelligence personnel at this level could certainly brief the commander that Aeroflot, the Soviet state airline, sometimes carries out intelligence missions, but what Soviet officer would be willing to say that Western airline companies never do?

By now, precious time had passed, but the aircraft, despite leaving Soviet airspace, could still be considered under Soviet control, for Soviet territory virtually

AD-A164 784

THE SOVIET RESPONSE TO KOREAN AIR LINES FLIGHT 007(U)  
ARMY COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLL FORT LEAVENWORTH KS  
J J JORDAN 07 JUN 85

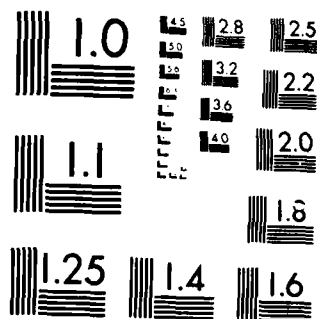
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MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART  
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A

surrounds the Sea of Okhotsk. Guidance from the national command was necessary.

It is impossible to determine Moscow's true response. It is possible that the Politburo was not aware of the situation until after it had been played out. Due to the nature of response finally taken, the Chief of the General Staff, Marshal Ogarkov, was likewise probably not actively involved. Participation from Moscow, if there was any, was probably that of simply concurring with actions taken by the military.

The decision was left to the Theater. And the Theater Air Commander, Marshal of Aviation Petr Kirsanov, made his decision by the book.

## LESSONS LEARNED AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

### Soviet Crisis Management

This thesis has uncovered one instance when responsibility for handling a crisis has reverted to the Soviet military. Whether the political leaders of the country deliberately allowed the military to resolve the question or whether they were unable to stop it from doing so, they left the personal management of an international problem to a military commander. This has serious implications for the United States and the rest of the world.

In the United States, the recognition of a need to have the civilian leadership manage crises brought about the creation of a Crisis Action System (CAS). The CAS exists to

ensure direct control of any crisis by the President and the National Command Authority (NCA). Briefly, CAS allows for situation monitoring and a phased development of response, during which the NCA explores every option available to it for resolving the problem, including political and diplomatic action. If military action is deemed necessary, the responsibility for it and control of it lies with the civilian leaders.<sup>1</sup>

The lack of similar safeguards in the Soviet system allows the Politburo to abdicate this responsibility to the military. This thereupon limits the number of ways an issue can be resolved to one: a military solution. An example of the depth to which this is anchored in Soviet policy can be seen in the Soviet border law giving local commanders the right to fire upon intruders into their airspace. Viktor Belenko maintains it goes beyond law, "...once an alien aircraft ventures into Soviet airspace it must not be allowed to escape."<sup>2</sup>

The KAL-007 incident is only one instance of the Soviet military controlling a crisis. Further research into Soviet responses to other crises may expose additional examples of direct military involvement in the decision-making process. Data taken from these other incidents may reveal a method for determining when crisis management reverts from civilian authorities to the military. Is it determined by time constraints? If so, does this mean the military bears the responsibility for deciding a

suitable response to a perceived threat of incoming missiles? Reaction time in this case would be much less than the two and one half hours available to the decision makers in the KAL instance.

Perhaps the switchover from civilian to military control of a crisis is based on degree of severity. If the destruction of a civilian airliner and the deaths of 269 innocent passengers constitute the less severe end of the scale, what does it take to get the national leadership involved in a crisis?

The participation of the military as decision makers, on the other hand, may be determined simply by the presence or absence of formal procedures. If this is the case, it is in our interests to find which events have corresponding responses formalized by procedure and which do not. Clearly, unauthorized aircraft flying over Soviet airspace are handled by procedure.

The importance of this type of information to American policy makers cannot be overemphasized. More in-depth analysis of other Soviet responses, how and at which level they were decided, would aid U.S. decision makers by allowing them to predict potential Soviet reactions to crises.

Soviet Tactical Decision Making: What it Means for the U.S.

It is essential to separate tactical decisions from strategic ones. Strategic decisions, such as the blockade of Berlin, are made according to situation, politically, by

Soviet civilian leaders to further national interests.

Tactical decisions, on the other hand, like the KAL incident, are made and carried out according to established procedures, in this case by the military.

By its very nature, a strategic decision can be affected by U.S. policies. Carried out over a period of time, implementation of a strategic decision is controlled by the national leaders. When international pressure threatens the interests for which the decision was made, the decision maker can change direction, modifying or completely changing the original decision. Thus the U.S. response to the Berlin blockade effected a change in position.

A tactical decision, on the other hand, is made at a lower level following strict guidelines. Although the results of the decision may change (perhaps due to faulty implementation) the same basic decision will be made over again until the procedure or guidelines are changed.

In the case of Soviet reaction to violations of its airspace, this change is unlikely to happen. Despite the intensity of international hostility toward the KAL events, the procedure used to deal with it appears to have remained intact. This is not unexpected, if one considers the history of Soviet Air Defense actions since WWII. Indeed, after the 1978 border incursion mentioned earlier, Soviet border law was actually strengthened. Clearly, actions taken by the United States after the fact stand little chance of forcing a change in procedure.



Of benefit would be a study to provide information surrounding incidents where guidelines and procedures for tactical decisions have been changed due to international pressure. The results of such a study could be analyzed for ways the U.S. might influence a change in Soviet guidelines vis-a-vis overflights of its territory.

Until the procedure changes, the Soviets will continue to respond in the unacceptable fashion described in the western saying, "Shoot first, ask questions later." Perhaps a more appropriate rendition for the Soviets would be, "Shoot first, make excuses later."

#### Disinformation

Soviet disinformation is one of the gravest threats to the United States and other modern democracies, where educated opinion is expected to guide national policy. It erodes the confidence of citizens in their government. It causes the public to apply pressure on their leaders in ways that benefit the Soviet Union. It can even promote division between America and her allies. Yet for all this, the word is virtually unknown to the Western man on the street. "Disinformation" does not even appear in Webster's New World Dictionary.

The Russian word "dezinformatsiya" means, "deception, using false information."<sup>3</sup> This describes perfectly much of the campaign waged by the Soviets to shift the blame from themselves to the American administration following the KAL incident. The extent of their success can be measured by the

large number of people who have allowed themselves to forget the basic issue, "Is it right to destroy a commercial airliner and kill 269 people aboard because that airliner has overflowed your country's airspace illegally?" and ask instead about American espionage involvement in the affair.

Following the KAL incident, American officials were surprised to find themselves on the defensive at press conferences. The Soviet statement that the Korean airliner was on a spy mission for U.S. Intelligence agencies provided the press with a controversy and an alternative to focusing on the Soviet role in the affair. Western publications had begun to speculate on possible involvement in the flight by the United States. The Soviet response to KAL-007 had been so vile that even the successful disinformation campaign had not removed them totally from the focus of attention, but their statements did force the U.S. to share in the undesirable spotlight of guilt.

Disinformation is successful in the West because most Westerners want to be fair and are prepared to examine both sides of an argument before making a decision on which side to support. What many are unwilling to accept is that the Soviet government blatantly lies. This thesis has shown many instances of Soviet statements which have been disproven and thus bear no similarity to actual events. Ogarkov's circuitous route is one example. His explanation is arithmetically impossible, yet some people still accept it as fact. Ogarkov's earlier statement that the KAL flight passed

over a sensitive Soviet naval installation at the same time an American reconnaissance satellite was overhead is also a fabrication. LTC John Reppert, Assistant Army Attache in Moscow at the time of the KAL incident, has calculated using Ogarkov's own figures that no such coincidence between the plane and the satellites occurred.<sup>4</sup> Ogarkov's lies raise doubts about the veracity of all Soviet statements.

More study is needed in the area of disinformation. The United States has found no effective countermeasure to a successful Soviet disinformation campaign. While some Soviet efforts are amaturish, such as the series of letters sent to African athletes and signed by the Ku-Klux Klan (sic--the term is hyphenated in Russian but not in English) warning them not to attend the Los Angeles Olympics, most campaigns reflect the high degree of sophistication in this field that the Soviets have achieved. In-depth studies of specific disinformation campaigns may yield a possible method for countering their influence. Meanwhile, as long as free people everywhere seek to formulate independent decisions based on information coming to them, Comrade Dezinformatsiya will be only too happy to provide it.

#### Maskirovka, Strategic Deception

This study has only touched on strategic maskirovka, which seems to have been extensively used during and after the incident. "Maskirovka" (lit. masking) refers to the Soviet practice of camouflage, concealment, and deception intended to mislead the enemy and thus achieve the surprise

necessary for victory. Concealment of strategic weapons and posturing is referred to as "strategic maskirovka" and has received special emphasis following the establishment of a Chief Directorate of Strategic Maskirovka (GUSM). GUSM is commanded by the senior First Deputy Chief of the General Staff, reflecting the importance strategic maskirovka has to the Soviet military. Researchers entertaining ideas about studying "Maskirovka and KAL-007" would find Yossef Bodansky's article, "Death By the Book," a good place to start.<sup>5</sup>

#### IN CONCLUSION

Although presented in this paper as an individual, Major Kazmin, the Soviet fighter pilot, is actually a synecdoche for all Soviet military officers. He is proud of his country, patriotic, and willing to carry out any order given him without question.

Failing a change in Soviet air defense procedure, the United States will deal with Major Kazmin again, perhaps not this year or next, but eventually. The final words of this thesis are his. "It is difficult to talk of my emotions at that moment. I had a specific task assigned me and I tried to accomplish it as well as possible, a military task, which is the meaning of my life."<sup>6</sup>

## CHAPTER 5

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Joint Staff Officer's Guide, AFSC Pub 1, July 1984, pp.7-4/7-8.

<sup>2</sup>Belenko, "What Really Happened."

<sup>3</sup>Slovar' Russkogo Yazyka, 1968 ed., s.v. "Dezinformatsiya."

<sup>4</sup>Personal interview, 30 April 1985

<sup>5</sup>Bodansky, "Death By the Book."

<sup>6</sup>"Soviet Fighter Pilots' Remarks on Television," The New York Times, 11 September 1983.

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# APPENDIX II

## TRANSLITERATION CHART

А	А	Р	Р
Б	В	С	С
В	У	Т	Т
Г	Г	У	У
Д	Д	Ф	Ф
Е	Е	Х	КН
Ж	ЖН	Ц	ТС
З	З	Ч	СН
И	І	Ш	ШН
Й	Ј	Щ	ШСН
К	К	Ъ	"
Л	Л	Ы	У
М	М	Ь	·
Н	Н	Э	ЕН
О	О	Ю	УУ
П	Р	Я	УА

### APPENDIX III

#### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS, AND FOREIGN WORDS

ABM - Anti-Ballistic Missile

ANO - Air Navigational Beacons

CC - Central Committee

CPSU - Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Deputat - Callsign used by the ground controller who directed the Soviet interceptor to KAL-007

DIA - Defense Intelligence Agency

DV - Far East (Dal'nij Vostok)

DV-TVD - Far Eastern Theater of Military Operations

DV-VO - Far Eastern Military District

GUSM - Chief Directorate for Strategic Maskirovka (Glavnoe Upravlenie Strategicheskoy Maskirovki)

IAPVO - Fighter Aviation of the Air Defense (Istrebitel'naya Aviatsiya PVO)

ICAO - International Civil Aviation Organization

KA-007, KAL-007, KE-007 - Korean Air Lines flight 007

KGB - Committee for State Security (Komitet Gosudarstvennoj Bezopasnosti)

Maskirovka - Soviet term for camouflage, concealment, and deception (lit. "masking")

PVO - Air Defense (Protivo-Vozdushnaya Oborona); originally PVO Strany (Air Defense of the Homeland), now Vojska PVO (Troops of the Air Defense)

RC - 135 - U.S. Reconnaissance aircraft; military version of Boeing 707

SA-5 - Surface-to-air missiles based in Kamchatka

SU-15 - Sukhoj-15 (NATO "Flagon"); two-engine interceptor  
flown in reaction to KAL-007 over Sakhalin Island

TASS - Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union (Telegrafnoe  
Agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuza); the official Soviet  
news agency

TVD - Theater of Military Operations (Teatr Voennykh  
Dejstvij); echelon above military district

VO - Military District (Voennyj Okrug)

APPENDIX IV  
CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

1950

8 April - B-29, flying photo recon mission over Soviet Baltic port city shoots at Soviet fighters reacting to it; "disappears" after heading out to sea.

Policy stated that Soviet pilots are duty bound to force violators to land and, if necessary, to open fire on them.

1958

2 September - EC-130 shot down over Armenia

1960

1 May - Francis Gary Powers in U2 enroute from Pakistan to Norway shot down over Sverdlovsk

5 May - Soviets report the shoot-down

July - RB-47 shot down over Barents Sea

1978

April - Korean Air Lines flight shot down over Soviet Karelia; the Soviets say it was "forced to land." KAL pilot claims he tried to contact the Soviets by radio, signalled his intention to follow, then was shot down. SOVIETS FOUND NO REASON TO BELIEVE THIS WAS A SPY PLANE.

1979

Articles written by leading Soviet air tactician berating pilots who fail to take risks or to take the initiative.

"Quick Kill" policy introduced--national PVO HQ permission is no longer needed to shoot down intruders

## 1982

Soviet Border Law enacted: article 36 gives Air Defense Forces permission to shoot down border violators.

## 1983

31 August - KAL-007 departs Anchorage

(12:45 A.M.) KAL-007, on course, begins to divert

(2:45 A.M.) RC-135 first tracked by Soviet radar (according to Soviets)

(4:00 A.M.) Soviet fighters begin tracking KAL-007

(4:51 A.M.) Second plane (KAL-007) first appears on Soviet radar screens (according to Soviets)

(5:07 A.M.) KAL wrongly reports position over Nippi. In fact, it is over Kamchatka

(6:12 A.M.) Soviet pilot reports visual contact; Japanese radar notes unidentified aircraft entering Sakhalin air space

(6:18 A.M.) KAL radios second incorrect position near Nokka and asks permission for routine ascent

(6:20 A.M.) KAL reports ascent complete; Japanese radar notes three fighters now with the plane

(6:23 A.M.) Korean aircraft pilot makes last contact with Japanese air controllers

(6:26 A.M.) Soviet pilot reports target destroyed

(6:27 A.M.) Final (garbled) transmission from Korean plane (according to the Japanese): "This is KE007..." followed by static

(6:38 A.M.) KAL-007 disappears from radar (according to US)

2 September - Pravda (page 5) first announces an unidentified aircraft was observed twice entering Soviet airspace; no air navigational lights, no response to fighters' actions, no radio communications

3 September - TASS first claims warning shots were fired and the plane "disappeared from radar" over the Sea of Japan



- 4 September - Pravda reports failure of censure in UN security council
- 5 September - Colonel General Romanov states in Pravda that Soviet pilots tried to contact KAL-007 on 121.5 mhz and a second emergency frequency, but got no reply; fighter fired three warning shots; says that pilot didn't realize plane was civil, it had the contours of an RC-135; warns governments that violators may be intercepted and compelled to land (cites Soviet Handbook of Aerial Navigation Information)
- 6 September - Pravda article states that flying without nav beacons is characteristic of American recon planes; states Tokyo FCC received a msg from the plane reporting passing over southern Kamchatka, all proceeding normally; says tapes refer to pilots mentioning an RC-135
- 7 September - Pravda announces that the Regional PVO command decided KAL-007 was a recon plane on a special mission  
  
Pravda announcement confirms that 121.5 mhz is set in Soviet fighters
- 9 September - Unprecedented Press conference in Moscow re KAL incident, led by Marshal Ogarkov, attended by Georgij Kornienko and Leonid Zam'yatin (head of International Information Dept)
- 13 September - Soviet pilot tells all in article for Krasnaya Zvezda; says he has been chasing RC-135s for 13 years; doesn't mention a Boeing 747
- 16 September - ICAO condemns shootdown
- 17 September - regular meeting of CPSU Politburo: reports ignore incident, focus on business as usual
- 20 September - Marshal of Aviation Kirsanov points out coincidence of Soviet missile tests, US spy satellites passing overhead, US recon planes and ships in the area, and the KAL flight
- September - Marshal of Aviation Koldunov's 60th birthday passes without traditional giving of award
- 24 October - comments of AF Chief of Staff, Rand Corporation analyst, MIT Professor, and others that Soviet AD is so inept, that possibility, perhaps probability is that Soviets really did mix KA-007 up with RC-135

1984

9 February - President Andropov dies

22 May - Obituary for Colonel General Romanov who died in performance of official duties

7 September - Ogarkov is relieved of duties as Chief of the General Staff and is designated CinC of the Western Theatre of War

3 December - Commander in Chief of Soviet Air Force, Marshal Kutakhov dies

27 December - Defense Minister Ustinov dies; replaced by Marshal Sokolov

APPENDIX V  
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST

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