
A. Shifrin, Executive Director

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MEMORANDUM
ON THE DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING THE
RECENT INVESTIGATION INTO THE FATE OF FLIGHT
KAL 007

At the onset, it should be noted that from the time that the tragedy had occurred on September 1, 1983 until the very end of 1990, there had been nothing published in the Soviet media concerning this issue. By the end of 1990, our Research Centre had already begun active negotiations through telephone and mail with our American counter parts concerning the initial results of our investigation which showed the necessity of reopening the case. At the end of 1990, the first Soviet article on the subject appeared in the Soviet government newspaper Izvestia. Its essence was that the Soviets must finally admit that shooting down a civilian plane constituting a crime and must apologize before the surviving relatives of the victims. Then, in the beginning of 1991, a letter was addressed to M. Gorbachev signed by the United States Senators E. Kennedy, W. Bradley, C. Levine, and S. Nunn, wherein the four Senators asked the Soviet President to investigate the matter. Instead of a reply, the Soviets attempted clearing their reputation by publishing in Izvestia a series of misinforming articles based on allegedly independent investigations conducted by the reporters of the newspaper. The article gave a lot of detail about what had happened over Sakhalin Island on the night of Sept. 1, 1983, as well as during the ensuing weeks of the so called investigation. The reader was led to believe that the details were obtained in course of the independent Izvestia investigation, but they were presented in such a way that the total picture was completely confused making it impossible to understand what had really happened. This was because different, utterly contradictory scenarios were analyzed and each and every one of them was supported by varying testimonies - contradicting one another. Moreover, the testimonies were often quoted out of context - so that it was absolutely impossible to guess what might be the meaning of the eyewitness testimony if read in its entirety. In order to show, however, just how objective they were in their attitude, and how independent of the official Soviet line, the authors of the Izvestia's articles presented many facts that unequivocally supported our information received through our channels and sources in the USSR in the course of our investigation. Among such facts are the following:

1. That the KAL Boeing 747 was first examined by the Soviet divers in its entirety on the bottom of the sea (and was also photographed from the air).
2. That neither bodies nor luggage nor life vests were found in the plane.
3. That all the passengers seat belts were found unfastened.

The publication of the articles containing a mixture of facts and misinformation continued from February to May 1991.

In May 1991, the results of our two year long investigation, including both technical data and eyewitness testimonies, were transferred, at senator Jesse Helms' request, to his office for further investigation. Our information was then

checked by Senator Helms and found cogent and containing no contradictions, as we were notified by his aides.

In July 1991, our Research Center sent out a detailed press release. It contained partial results of our investigation and provided a sufficient proof that KAL 007 had not crashed into the sea after the rocket attack, but, rather, water landed near Sakhalin Island, after which, the passengers were rescued by Soviet Coast guard vessels and were later transported, on instructions from Moscow, to mainland concentration camps. Congressman Larry Macdonald, who was on board and who presented very special interest for KGB, was separated and sent for interrogation to Moscow while the others had to remain hidden in the camps as their release would have been impossible without the release of Congressman Macdonald.

At the end of our press release, we urged all interested governments and individuals to contact us for more detailed information. As a result, relatives of the missing passengers of KAL 007, living in Israel contacted us and initiated a wider transfer of our materials both to the Committee of the Relatives in New York and to the United States and Philippine government administrations.

In early October 1991, we sent our press release with brief accompanying letters to the Soviet President Gorbachev, to the Russian President Yeltsin, and to the newspaper Izvestia. In addition to the data substantiating that the plane had not crashed and that the passengers had not perished, this material contained explicit statements that we knew the addresses of the camps and prisons where the kidnapped victims of the Soviet's most outrageous crime are now being kept.

The first to react to our communication was the newspaper Izvestia. On October 31, 1991, its special New York correspondent A. Shalnev (one of the co-authors of the Izvestia articles on KAL 007) called us from Moscow. He offered us cooperation in further research of the matter in exchange for our cooperation; we were to give them the addresses of the camps where KAL 007 victims are being kept. Shalnev said that they had published our press release in their newspaper ("in one of the issues of the last week of October"). Shalnev also said that he wanted to come to Israel to interview us on provision that we accept their pre-condition, i.e., our giving them the addresses of the camps. He also offered that we go together to check the accuracy of the camps addresses. It became immediately clear to us that the Soviets quite alarmed with our findings and wanted to know if the addresses that we have are precise and in the case they are – to transfer the prisoners to another place. Therefore, we refused to give the addresses to Shalnev and told him that we were ready to give the addresses only to a group that would go to the USSR to check these addresses and which would consist of Senator Helms (or his proxy) and representatives of the Relatives' Committee. At that point, the Izvestia people would be permitted to join the group.

The next move was made by the officials of the Soviet government. In the beginning of November 1991, i.e., a few days after the Shalnev telephone call, the Soviet authorities officially invited the Committee of the Relatives to Moscow for a meeting with them to solve the open issues of the KAL tragedy. The relatives, won over and misguided by the attention of the Soviet authorities and deceived by oft-repeated official statements of their loved ones' death in 1983 (supported by the "independent" investigation of Izvestia), decided to go to the USSR, not in order to verify the authenticity of information that maintained that

their relatives were indeed alive – but rather in order to accomplish the following:

1. the return of the remains of the bodies.
2. the return of personal belongings and disposition of important papers and other items “which could facilitate the settlement of insurance claims or estate problems”.
3. settlement of compensation matters and in particular, the suggestion of the establishment by the Russian government of a “KAL 007 Memorial Fund”.
4. the transfer of the Black Boxes and voice recorders to International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in Montreal.
5. the holding of a Memorial Service on Sakhalin Island on Sept.1, 1992 to be attended by high high government officials.
6. letters of **condolences** written by President Gorbachev to the families of the victims.

This action of the Committee, if indeed it would be accomplished, would, in effect, fulfill the **intention of the Soviets, i.e., to seal the case forever!**

What the relatives were unaware of when they received the Soviet invitation was that the invitation had come as a reaction to our urging upon Gorbachev to reopen the investigation, to release the innocent victims, and to put the blame on those that are in any way responsible and who are even now awaiting trial for their participation in the August coup. These people are: former Defense Minister Yazov (who, in 1983, was the Commander of the Far Eastern Military District), former KGB Chief Kryuchkov (who, in 1983, was the Head of the KGB Foreign Department and as such, was personally interested in the interrogation of Congressman Macdonald), and former General Varennikov (who, in 1983, was appointed to head the State’s secret commission to investigate the KAL 007 incident). We wrote to President Gorbachev that by doing so, he would gain the respect and appreciation of the entire free world as a champion of real democracy. Instead, he chose to support those who perpetuated one of the most dreadful crimes against humanity and to continue in their crime.

Why did the Soviets decide to make resolution now? Why didn’t they do so in 1983? Why hadn’t Gorbachev done it when he came into office or even when he opened the era of the so-called “Glasnost” when he started admitting the crimes of his predecessors? Why had it not occurred to him before? And why did it occur to him only now after we had informed him that we knew where the kidnapped people were being kept?

It is clear that were all the KAL 007 people dead by now, the Soviets would have totally ignored our claim that we knew for a certainty that the people were alive and that we knew where they were being held. The very fact that Izvestia reporter Shalnev (or the KGB officer who posed as Shalnev) called us plying us as to the exact locations of the camps where the passengers were being held, more than anything else, proves that the Soviets know of the existence and the locality of the camps and were merely verifying the accuracy of the knowledge that we possess. They know they have a secret and are troubled by the thought that somebody came close to it!

We now realize that they lied to us: they hadn’t published our press release in Izvestia. They said that they had done so in order to bribe us through

gratitude to provide them the addresses of the camps – thus, they would be able to re-hide the people.

What has come as a total surprise is the openly hostile stand taken against our Research Center and against our KAL 007 investigation by the head of the Relatives Committee, Mr. H. Ephraimson who is attempting to put every possible obstacle in the way of our investigation – even though he has received from us nothing but the information that we have at our disposal. We have received from the Senate and from other sources certain information concerning his insinuations against us. It should be interesting for the Committee members to inquire of him why he is acting so strangely. Yet another fact seems strange in the present situation. The United States Administration, as well as the governments of Korea and Japan, continue to ignore not only the results of our investigation, but even the Soviet newspaper's investigation (conducted "independently" with the use of the military owned equipment in the KGB supervised area) which proved that the Soviets lied all along and which claimed that –

1. they, indeed, found the Black Boxes
2. the plane did not "disintegrate into pieces" but was complete under water
3. there were no bodies and no luggage in the plane.

Having only these facts would, in itself, be enough to demand from the USSR an accounting in a most decisive manner and a conducting – after all these years – a serious investigation into the matter. Our material could be used as a basis for an official Senate hearing on the subject, as well as for an investigation by the administration.

In publishing this information, we urge all those who are interested in the search for and the rescue of the innocent victims of the KAL 007 tragedy **not to comply** with the Soviet enticements, misinformation and lies, but instead, **to demand from the USSR an immediate release of the kidnapped people and *not their bodies!***

Those who are ready to accept the Soviet offer hope to receive at least the bodies of their loved ones. They should read the latest Soviet publication on the subject in the Nov. 2 issue of Izvestia which states: "The relatives must remember that they are not going to see the bodies." We must point out the fact behind the scenario. **There are no bodies – only live people whom the Soviets do not want to release.** In this new situation, the free people in the free world should be on the forefront of the efforts to rescue the victims from the Soviet hands, rather than adapting themselves to the actions forced upon them by the Soviet criminals who are always ready to create new lies.