

“I armed my missiles and brought the nose down sharply. It worked! I saw that I had lock-on. The first missile was fired when the distance between us was about five kilometers. Only now I could really see the intruder.”

Lt. Col. Gennadiy Nikolayevich Osipovich
Soviet Air Force

“Very strange people were at work very early on. Within a matter of three hours there were American accents heard in the town. Over that night there were large numbers, by which I mean twenty, twenty-five, thirty people arrived. The next day...there was a whole bevy of people walking down the main street with blue windbreakers and baseball hats with 'FBI' on them...there were a lot of other Americans there who were in town who weren't wearing FBI windcheaters...I know who some of them were, and it certainly wasn't tourists.”

David Ben-Ariyeh, British journalist
On the bombing of Pan Am 103

Ambush Over Moneron

By Craig Roberts

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On the dark, cold night of September 1, 1983, a Boeing 747 Jumbo Jet carrying 269 passengers flew placidly over the Western Pacific. Its destination was Seoul, the capital of South Korea.

It would never arrive.

Unknown to the crew, the airliner had strayed off course. For some reason, the sophisticated primary and secondary navigation systems failed to alert them that their course line had altered far to the west of where they should have been, and at that very moment had put them dangerously close to the Kamchatka Peninsula of the Soviet Union. Had they received an accurate plot, they would have been alarmed to know that they were well within the Soviet Air Defense Zone—and the Russians took the presence of intruders seriously. Only five years before, another jet airliner belonging to the same company, Korean Airlines (KAL) had strayed into Soviet airspace and had been intercepted. On that occasion, the Soviet interceptor pilot had twice told Soviet ground controllers that he had identified the intruder and that it was a civilian airliner—even identifying the company and type, a Boeing 707 with KAL markings. Both times he was told to proceed with shoot-down procedures, and both times he refused. However after the third order, and probably realizing the dire personal consequences for failure to obey a direct command, he reluctantly fired a missile which killed two passengers and disabled the aircraft. The Korean crew fought desperately to save their ship and miraculously managed to land the crippled airplane on a frozen Soviet lake. The passengers were released two days later, but the Soviets kept the 707. KAL Flight 007 would not be so lucky.

Besides the error in navigation, something else was occurring. For like the fated 707, they too were being tracked by Soviet air defense radar and would soon be joined by Russian interceptors.

The Soviet radar operators had already spent the night tracking an American air force Boeing RC-135—a four-engine 707 derivative especially equipped with sophisticated radios and other electronics for reconnaissance and spy work—and were completely alert when the new blip, KAL 007, appeared on their screens. Only this time, instead of assuming the routine race-track oval flight pattern just outside their air defense interception zone (ADIZ), the new target continued southwest at an angle that would place it inside the ADIZ within minutes.

The air defense officer at the radar site made a quick decision. He would scramble the "alert" fighters. Within minutes the Soviet interceptor pilots manned their aircraft, rolled onto the runway and, shoving their throttles past the afterburner detent, roared into the night sky.

Each pilot came up on the radio in turn and was given a steer to the bogey. But for some reason, the radar vectors were faulty. For no matter how hard the frustrated controllers tried, they could not seem to vector their flight to a point of visual contact with the intruder. In the end, after searching until they were too low on fuel to continue, the MiG flight returned to base. Incredibly, the sleek supersonic fighters, even with the aid of a sophisticated ground defense radar network, which was at that time suffering problems similar to 007's navigation systems, had not come within 50 miles of the lumbering Jumbo Jet.

KAL 007, still not realizing how close they were getting to the Siberian coastline, continued on. Then, as other radar sites began to pick up the 747, another flight was ordered into the air. This time it came from the air defense station on Sakhalin, who scrambled four aging Sukhoi Su-15 "Flagon" interceptors (which were not equipped with the sensitive electronic systems of the MiGs). In the cockpit of the lead Sukhoi, No. 805, sat Lt. Col. Gennadiy Nikolayevich Osipovich.

The Korean airliner, flying straight and level at an airspeed somewhere below 500 mph, had managed to fly completely across the wide Kamchatka Peninsula, the 500 mile expanse of the Sea of Okhotsk north of the Kuril Islands, and was approaching Sakhalin Island just north of Hokkaido, Japan, and had managed to do so completely unmolested—which infuriated the Soviet commanders.

The Sakhalin radar operators were more successful than their Kamchatka counterparts in tracking the bogey and vectoring their interceptors. As they were doing so, for some reason, Soviet commanders were changing the radar blip identification from "non-Soviet aircraft" to "American RC-135."

As the flight of four Su-15s converged on the 747, General Ivan Tretyak, commander of the Soviet Far East Military District, and his superior, General Vladimir Govorov, commander of the Far East Theater of Operations, decided Osipovich should maneuver his flight closer to the target for visual identification.

Fearful that pilots might defect, as had Lt. Viktor Belenko who had flown to Japan in a shiny new super-secret MiG-25 eight years before, the interceptor flight's tanks had only been filled with enough fuel for local operations. They would not have much time to loiter once contact was made with the bogey, and a decision concerning what course of action to take next would have to be made quickly by the ground staff.

At 6:15 a.m. Osipovich received orders to close with the intruder and identify it. But before he could do so, he was ordered by Tretyak to "Kill the intruder." Horrified crewmen aboard the American RC-135, who had been monitoring the Soviet activities, heard this order repeated no less than five times.

KAL 007, which had unknowingly managed to evade the latest and most capable Soviet MiG fighters, was now about to leave Soviet airspace after flying completely across Sakhalin Island. Within a few minutes the huge jet would reenter international airspace and escape. Unfortunately, this was not going to be permitted.

At 6:23 the four Su-15s fell into trail behind the unsuspecting 747. One minute later, Osipovich, reacting to the command to destroy the target, lit his afterburners and activated his missile system which consisted of two Anab air-to-air missiles. Almost immediately his missile seekers locked on to the heat source of the 747's engines and his armament panel began to flash. He reported back to the ground station that he had lock-on and was prepared to launch missiles. The target was now only five kilometers distant, well within range of the Su-15's Anabs. Osipovich, in his own words later, stated: "...suddenly in my earphones I heard this: 'Abort destruction! Match altitude with the target and force it to land.' I was already approaching the intruder from below. I matched speeds and started to flash him [author's note: Osipovich was probably referring to his landing lights]. But he did not respond. 'Give him some warning bursts,' I heard from the ground. I fired four bursts, firing off more than 200 rounds. But what was the sense of that? I had armor-piercing rounds, not incendiaries [tracers]. And it was hardly likely that anyone would see them."

There was no way the crew of the 747 could have seen Osipovich flashing his landing lights. The Soviet pilot was behind and below the large airliner. Yet he goes on to say that "I have no doubt that they noticed me... The reaction of the pilots was unambiguous—they quickly reduced speed. Now they were moving at about 400 kilometers per hour [250 mph]. I was moving faster...I simply could not go more slowly. In

my opinion the intruder's reckoning was simple: If I did not want to stall and go into a spin, I would be forced to overtake them. And that is what happened. We had already flown past the island; it is narrow at that point. And it was then that the command was given from the ground: 'Destroy the target.'"

In this statement, Osipovich tells two lies. First, he states that his interceptor could not reduce speed below 400 kph and that he would be forced to overshoot or stall out. This is not true. To keep from overshooting he had two choices: First, he could retard his throttle, drop a few degrees of flaps, even drop his landing gear, and go into a "slow flight" configuration. Obviously the Su-15 could slow to a much slower speed considering that it lands at approximately 105 knots. The second choice would be to reduce his forward progress by maneuvering. Simply put, he could "S" turn while the Korean airliner continued on a straight course. The second lie concerns his use of gunfire. The Su-15 does not have an internal gun. Instead, if armed in advance, it is capable of mounting two GSh-23L 23mm gunpods. Each pod carries two cannon, with 100 rounds of ammunition for each gun in each pod for a total of 400 rounds. Because of maneuverability restrictions concerning external loads (the two gunpods are mounted on belly pylons in the center of the fuselage) external gunpods are seldom carried. Instead, the interceptors rely on the two air-to-air missiles. They can be employed from a far greater range with much more devastating effect. By Soviet doctrine, the GSh-23 gunpods were only carried in the off chance that the fighter might get into a close-in dogfight. Even at this, the Flagon was designed for straight line speed to head off intruding bombers and not for maneuverability. It therefore had to rely on stand-off distance and missile capability to make it a lethal aircraft.

Osipovich chose to maneuver his aircraft in a vertical climbing turn behind KAL 007 to preclude overshooting the slowing target. "I... managed to make a sharp turn and was now above and running on to him. But then I had a thought. I dropped 2,000 [he doesn't say feet or meters—all Soviet aircraft altimeters are marked in meters, which would have him drop approximately 6,500 feet!]. . . I armed my missiles and brought the nose down sharply. It worked! I saw that I had lock-on. The first missile was fired when the distance between us was about five kilometers. Only now I could really see the intruder. It was larger than an IL-76 and its outline was something like a TU-16. The trouble for all Soviet pilots is that we do not study civilian aircraft belonging to foreign companies. I knew all the military aircraft, all the reconnaissance aircraft. But this was not like any of them."

This last statement is also untrue. The Soviet military encyclopedia contains photographs and identification silhouettes of both military and commercial aircraft. The 747 is represented, and its distinctive whale-like shape is quite unique. Also, if the target did not resemble any reconnaissance aircraft, then why was it later stated that Osipovich confused it for a much smaller RC-135?

But the biggest problem with Osipovich's story is with his time-line of events. For as he was supposedly performing these time consuming maneuvers, the RC-135 radio operators were monitoring the Soviet radio conversations and Japanese air traffic controllers and radar operators were observing the progress of KAL 007. They had just given the KAL pilots permission to climb to 35,000 feet—which might explain why Osipovich thought the aircraft was slowing down in an attempt to evade him. It was actually climbing to a higher flight level, which caused it to slow in speed relative to the pursuers. [Author's note: Why did the Japanese controllers at this point not tell KAL-007 they were off course, far into Soviet air defense territory?]

In actuality, the time span between General Tretyak's 6:15 order for Osipovich to maneuver closer to the radar target and the receipt of the final command to "Kill the intruder," at 6:25, was only ten minutes.

At 6:26, Osipovich said he fired two missiles simultaneously. The Anabs ran true and, according to Osipovich, struck the 747 "one near the tail, and the other took off half the left wing." This would not be true if Osipovich actually was "70 right" of the plane as he reported to ground controllers. The heat-

seeking missiles would have homed in on the nearest engine, in this case, number four right outboard engine.

But contrary to later reports, the missiles did not cause the 747 to explode in flight. Even though Osipovich transmitted at 6:26 that "The target is destroyed," the Tokyo air traffic controllers reported that one minute later they picked up a broken radio transmission from KAL 007: "Tokyo, Korean Air zero zero seven...fifteen thousand holding with rapid decompression! Descending to one zero thousand...[10,000 feet]. *Tokyo Radio acknowledged KAL 007 but did not advise them that they were off course because they were probably not in range of Tokyo radar which was over 900 miles away.*

This is exactly what the emergency procedures call for in such an incident. To the 747 pilots, the explosion of the missiles must have sounded like a rupture in the pressure hull of the aircraft—and possibly shrapnel from the explosive warheads of the Anabs, which homed in on the tailpipe of one of the engines, had indeed pierced the cabin of the airliner. If this occurred, yellow oxygen masks would automatically be deployed from the overhead compartments above the passenger seats and the sudden decompression in the cabin would have been felt throughout the aircraft. The pilots, realizing that there is only sufficient oxygen to sustain human life below 12,500 feet, would immediately begin an emergency descent.

Had the 747 exploded, as the official version later recounted, it would have struck the surface of the ocean in less than three minutes. This did not happen. The Japanese controllers knew that the Korean crew continued to maintain control of the Boeing for another *12 minutes!*

At 6:32, KAL 007 descended from Flight Level 35 (35,000 feet) to 16,400 feet. This was confirmed on Japanese radar. Then after a couple of minutes, the big jet began another descent. It appears that the crew could not maintain altitude and was fighting valiantly to save the ship. It is not known if there was insufficient power in the remaining engines to maintain altitude, or if another engine had failed due to fuel lines being severed, or possibly there were further complications from fire. But for whatever reason, the 747 again began to descend and at 6:39 had dropped to 5,000 feet. Three minutes later it fell below 1,000 feet, and at 6:40 a.m. local time, it was lost below radar 1.5 miles from Moneron Island.

Twenty-seven minutes after Osipovich fired his missiles, another Russian pilot reported that he was making "reference point circles" over the wreckage and that "rescue operations were underway." If KAL 007 had exploded, as the official Western reports stated the next day, then why would a Soviet search plane bother to make circles over the wreckage, and rescue operations initiated? What was there to rescue?

Contrary to this, later Soviet press releases explained that the Russian fighter pilots actually reported: "I don't see it" (1829:13); "No I don't see it" (1835:54); "He doesn't see anything in the area. I just looked" (1838:37). None of Osipovich's comrades could find the wreckage of his "kill" where it was supposed to be. These statements must be compared to the burning wreckage of TWA 800 which crashed into the Atlantic of East Moriches, New York, on July 17, 1996. The fuel from this incident burned for hours, marking the location of the main wreckage site.

Within two hours of the shootdown, Soviet defense stations in Sakhalin were in communication with Moscow. The information they relayed was not good. They had mistakenly downed a civilian airliner—*and some of the passengers were American!* How could anyone know that any of the passengers were American? Had they discovered floating bodies that still held readable identification papers or passports? According to both Soviet and Western press releases, no bodies were ever recovered, and no wreckage was ever found. This in itself is not only improbable, it is unbelievable. As in every example of an air

disaster over water, and in most instances of ship sinkings, bodies surface and are recovered. One case in point is the tragic shutdown of the Iranian Airbus over the Persian Gulf by an American missile frigate Vincennes. Dozens of bodies floated to the surface from the ruptured cabin and were photographed by the world press floating in clusters just below the surface of the sea. Though the colder water in the Sea of Japan would delay such an occurrence due to better temperature preservation of flesh, eventually the bodies would bloat and rise to the surface. With the exception of a few body parts that allegedly drifted ashore in Japan, 250 miles away, which could not be identified as having originated aboard the fated flight, no bodies were reportedly recovered.

Four hours after the shutdown, Marshal Ogarkov could see an already negative international incident rapidly deteriorating into a world relations disaster. The only way it might be salvaged would be by a world-class deception created with layers of lies. Even as a vast armada of Soviet vessels converged on Moneron Island, Ogarkov began formulating a story of intrigue and espionage. According to the rapidly fabricated version of events, the Korean airliner had joined up with the RC-135, which had already probed Soviet airspace on several occasions that night, and then had flown on to cross over Kamchatka, the Sea of Okhotsk, and finally Sakhalin. It was obviously on a spy mission, probably had secret cameras and eavesdropping devices on board, and flagrantly ignored all warnings given by the Russians. The Russians were left with no choice but to shoot it down. The Americans, of course, were to blame. It was them who had placed the 269 innocent passengers at risk for their own selfish reasons. The Americans, by their deceitful actions, had murdered those people and would now try to blame it on the Russians, who had been forced to defend their homeland.

Moscow had a choice. The government could do one of two things: buy the tale and reinforce it, supporting the Far East Defense Command in the process, or place the blame on over-zealous officers and punish them accordingly. This latter choice would have been the easiest. There could be an investigation, a finding of a tragic mistake having been made, blame fixed on the lowest ranking officer who could be pegged as responsible, an apology issued, and life would go on. But instead, Moscow bought Ogarkov's version of the event and began an immediate campaign of disinformation.

The end result is that the world press swallowed the Soviet version and even came up with other reinforcing stories that the Korean 747 had indeed been on a CIA spy mission. The Washington Post headlined a six-column article with "Article in Britain Links Ill-Fated KAL Flight to Intelligence Mission." The piece referred to originally appeared in Britain's Defence Attache' magazine. But when the author of the article, who claimed that KAL 007 was engaged in espionage, was finally tracked down, it was discovered that he was a London advertising agent with no technical expertise and no remarkable or inside knowledge of the event.

Then, in 1984, a Yale graduate student named David Pearson, wrote an article for The Nation that stated "...the U.S. government also must be held accountable" for the deaths of the passengers aboard KAL 007, because "It seems probable that Soviet radar systems were jammed at least on Kamchatka Peninsula and perhaps on Sakhalin Island." If this were true, the Russians would have jumped on it to reinforce their disinformation. And beyond this, if the radar was indeed jammed, then Osipovich's flight would never have found KAL 007.

In the end, even after President Reagan denounced the Soviets as murderers and called for an international investigation, the issue faded into history and was all but forgotten. General Tretyak was promoted to head all Soviet air defenses; General Govorov was promoted to deputy minister of defense; and Marshal Ogarkov became personal military adviser to Mikhail Gorbachev.

Osipovich was not so lucky. It seems that in the Russian military, as in other forces, the proverbial excretion rolls downhill. After being told by his commander, Colonel Kornukhov, that he had shot down a

foreigner and to "make another hole in your shoulder boards for a new star," Osipovich was instead ostracized. After the arrival of an investigating committee, Osipovich was, in his own words, suddenly "a son of a bitch."

During the investigation, which ironically was reported after the fall of Communism by none other than Izvestiya, the official government newspaper, Osipovich makes a startling statement. "In the grand reckoning," he reflected, "I have no doubt that we were right. A foreign aircraft was in our airspace for two and a half hours, and during that time it covered a distance of more than 2,000 kilometers. All the air traffic control services of foreign states said not a word, remained silent. What order can you give in such a situation? Sit on your hands?" [Author's emphasis].

Izvestiya came out with a 17 part expose' of the Soviet cover-up surrounding KAL 007 which ran between December 21, 1990 and February 6, 1991. The series reported on Izvestiya's efforts to discover the actual "truth" regarding the shutdown, and surprisingly, was considered the most accurate and in-depth version of the incident ever published. According to Izvestiya, the wreckage of KAL 007 was found almost immediately and divers were sent down to examine it. Three flight recorders were found and recovered, and were quickly rushed off to Moscow. But not one body was found! According to a Soviet diver who had examined the wreck, "The main thing was not what we had seen there, but what we had not seen. The divers found practically no human bodies or remains." What had become of the 269 passengers and nine crewmembers?

Unless they weren't there.

If the bodies did not surface, and they were not found in the wreckage, then they had to have been either rescued or recovered immediately after the crash. If this is so, then the survivors—or their bodies—were transported to the nearby Siberian island of Sakhalin, probably to the nearest settlement: Shebunino. If not this small town, then perhaps Gornozavodsk, Nevel'sk, or the larger community of Khomn'sk, all of which are along the southwestern coastline of Sakhalin facing the tiny island of Ostrov Moneron. From any of these places it would be reasonable to assume that they would be quickly transhipped to the nearest city: Kharbarovsk, on the mainland of Siberia.

It should be remembered that it was in Kharbarovsk that the Soviets held the War Crimes Tribunals for the Japanese captured at Mukden and Pingfan in World War II, and served as the primary destination for the American POWs taken in Korea—and some of those received from Vietnam—and was the city that contained the largest military installations in southeast Siberia. It was from here that thousands of people had disappeared into the Gulags.

But why would the Soviets care about incarcerating or eliminating innocent civilians? Was it because they were witnesses to the truth? That they could testify that they were ambushed and there was no warning—no gunshots across the nose, no blinking of landing lights from the interceptors?

Hardly. It was more likely that they were victims of a far greater and much darker plot than even the Soviets could fathom.

Only one small mention was ever made in the Western press of the importance of one of the passengers who perished aboard 007. Buried in most accounts is the fact that U.S. Congressman Larry McDonald of Georgia was aboard the Jumbo Jet. What is not pointed out is that Congressman McDonald was involved in a major investigation of the world banking cartel, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Federal Reserve Board, and other significant entities that were interrelated with each of these.

McDonald was the most dedicated anti-communist on Capital Hill, and the press had noted that "From the time he took his oath of office in 1975 until the moment of the shootdown, Congressman McDonald had systematically carried out a campaign against the Soviet communists of a sort which no other U.S. elected official had ever done on his own." In The Day of the Cobra author Jeffrey St. John writes: "Congressman Lawrence McDonald had spent his entire career warning against the use of terrorism as an instrument of Soviet policy, particularly the use of the threat of nuclear war by the Kremlin as a weapon to paralyze the United States and its Western allies' will to resist."

But McDonald had gone beyond fighting simple Soviet communism. He had discovered a spiderweb of hidden corridors that linked power brokers in Moscow with those in New York and Washington. This, in turn, made him a threat to the Establishment/international banking cabal. This put him at crossed swords with the Council of Foreign Relations and its international brethren of New World Order and One World Government proponents. In The Rockefeller File, authored by Gary Allen, McDonald wrote the foreword and railed against "the drive of the Rockefellers and their allies to create a one-world government, combining super-capitalism and communism under the same tent."

McDonald went on to establish his Western Goals Foundation, whose purpose was "to rebuild and strengthen the political, economic, and social structure of the United States and Western Civilization so as to make any merger with totalitarians impossible." It is probable that with his discovery of the shadow world of international finance and power brokers—and their goal of globalism and control of international relations—that he had gone too far. It is unlikely that the whole truth will ever be known, but one question will forever remain. Was KAL 007 misdirected over the island of Sakhalin so that an aerial ambush of Dr. Lawrence McDonald could be accomplished?

Since the original data was released and the first investigations were conducted, other information has surfaced. One FAA investigator who was working in Asia at the time discovered that the Japanese at the Tokyo radar site actually monitored the 747 below the 5000 foot level and saw it do something other than the official "crash in the ocean" version. According to them, they watched as the target turned toward Sakhalin Island, descended, and apparently landed on the island! Shortly after the attack, the Rome, Georgia office of Congressman McDonald received several calls from not only KAL officials, but from the FAA claiming they had evidence that the jet landed in Russian territory. One call was recorded by their office:

"This is Duty Officer Orville Brockman at FAA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. We have just received information from our FAA representative, Mr. Dennis Wilham in Tokyo, as follows: He has been advised by the Japanese Civil Aviation Bureau headquarters, Air Traffic Division, Mr. Takano—T-A-K-A-N-O—who is his counterpart in Japanese aviation, as follows: Japanese self-defense force confirms that the Hokkaido radar followed Air Korea to a landing in Soviet territory on the Island of Sakhalinska—S-A-K-H-A-L-I-N-S-K-A—and it is confirmed by the manifest that Congressman McDonald was on board." [Emphasis mine]

This would explain many things, including the lack of bodies and wreckage, plus the Soviet fighter pilots not being able to locate a crash site on the water. It also would explain another cryptic event—an American reporter came out of Russia just prior to the publication of the Izvestiya series and stated that the series would reveal "that Moscow had ordered the bodies of the 269 victims destroyed in a local crematorium." That information did not later appear in Izvestiya. However, if the airplane had landed on the island safely and discharged its passengers, why would orders be given to "cremate the victims"?

Considering the fact that millions of Soviet citizens, prisoners of war, and political enemies and dissidents of the communist government have "disappeared" into Siberia in the past, would it be unusual for the

Russians to "disappear" a few more embarrassing foreigners? Orders from Moscow for this event to happen might simply be: "Cremate the victims."

There are many other questions that deserve answers as well. First, how could a modern airliner, which was on a routine IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) flight under positive control of the international controllers have been permitted to stray several hundred miles off course without correction? Osipovich himself reported that "all the air traffic control services of foreign states said not a word...remained silent."

Second, why had not the RC-135, which was conveniently on location—ostensibly there to monitor a missile launch—notified either the KAL crew or the Japanese air control facilities of the 747's incursion into Soviet air space? Every military flight crew realizes all too well the consequences of flying too close to the Soviet Union, and the RC-135, which had radios on board that could monitor the Soviet frequencies, had the capability of relaying the critical information to both the KAL crew and the Japanese controllers. They also knew the Korean crew did not have this capability.

Third, what happened to the 747's navigation systems? Besides on-board radar, VOR and LORAN systems, there are inertial navigation positioning systems that are accurate within a kilometer. Had they failed? If so, why had not the Korean crew notified the ground stations?

Fourth, why did the experienced crew of KAL 007 manage to go over 200 miles off course without realizing it? The obvious answer is that they were directed to do so. When flying IFR at night, the normal procedure is to be given a steer for a course line until further advised. As an example, such a transmission would be "KAL 007, maintain flight level three-five-zero, steer two-zero-five." Translated, this tells the pilot to maintain an altitude of 35,000 feet and fly a magnetic heading of 205 degrees. What had KAL 007 been told to do?

Lastly, what happened to the bodies?

Or the survivors?