WORLD NEWS

Did Korean 747 ignore Soviet fighters?
SAKHALIN

The loss of a Korean Air
Lines Boeing 747 with 269
people on board has led to a
major diplomatic row. The
United States accused the
Soviet Union of deliberately
shooting down the 747, while,
as of September 1, the USSR
maintains that its fighters
intercepted the Boeing but it
ignored their "offers of assis-
tance, signals, and warnings",
and continued en route. The
USSR has neither admitted
nor denied shooting down the
747.

The 747 was operating
KAL's KE007 service from
New York to Seoul via
Anchorage, where a stop was
made to take on a fresh crew
and refuel. The 747 departed
Anchorage for Seoul at 1400
GMT on August 31, with
Capt Chim Byong-in in
command. The flight plan
was to follow a Great Circle
route flying south west to
make landfall over Hokkaido,
northernmost of the main
Japanese islands. On this
route, Soviet airspace is to the
north west of track. At some
stage in the flight KE007
appears to have drifted north-
wards, and apparently was
following a parallel course to
that intended. Two hours out
of Anchorage the 747 was
picked up by the Soviet air-
defence radar system on the
Kamchatka Peninsula.

Both the Kamchatka
Peninsula and the neigh-
bouring Sakhalin Island are
major Soviet military areas,
housing a nuclear submarine
base, a surface vessel port and
at least two airfields, one
housing a regiment of
Tu-22M Backfires, the other
with MiG-23 Floggers. Naval
Aviation Pacific Fleet forces
in the area include Tu-16
Badgers, 11-38 Mays, and
probably Be-12 Mail flying
boats. As a major military
base, the area is closely
monitored by the USA using
both satellite reconnaissance
and electronic intelligence-
gathering ships.

US Secretary of State
George Schultz says that the
747 was first noted by Soviet
radar at 1600 GMT (0100
local), about to enter Soviet
airspace in the region of the

IT**'
Kamchatka Peninsula. The
aircraft crossed the peninsula
and continued over the Sea of
Okhostk towards Sakhalin.

The 747 was intercepted by
up to eight fighters. This
suggests that the aircraft was
intercepted at an early stage
of its intrusion and then
followed by a succession of
fighters.
At 1812 GMT, according to
the USA, a Soviet fighter
pilot reported visual contact
with the 747 at about 30,000ft
("at 10,000m,"). By then the
aircraft had overflown Sakha-
lin and was over the Sea of
Japan. At 1826 the pilot of the
fighter, understood to be a
MiG-23MF Flogger B, was
said by US sources to have
been cleared to fire by his
Ground Controlled Intercept
(GCI) station. According to
the USA, he then reported:
"taken aim and fired.. .the
target is destroyed, I am

breaking away". At 1830 an
intercepted radio message,
presumably from the GCI
station, reported the target
"at 5,000m"; at 1838 radio
contact was lost. Japanese
fishermen in the area noted a
large explosion at or around
this time, about 0330 local.
Soviet search and rescue
aircraft reached the crash site
about one hour later and
reported a fuel slick on the
surface of the sea. No
survivors were reported.

Unconfirmed reports indi-
cate that at 1825 KE007
requested Japan Oceanic
Control's clearance to climb
to 35,000ft. No reason was
given for this request, and
clearance was given.
Internationally understood
procedures are used by fight-
ers intercepting unidentified
radar contacts. It is usual for
the fighter to be radar-
directed by a GCI station.

The controller will position
the fighter in the intruder's 6
o'clock low position at a range
of around 5 n.m. The fighter
pilot will identify the intruder
on his own radar and gradu-
ally increase speed to close for
a visual inspection.
The fighter will then report
the aircraft type, nationality,
operator, registration, height,
course, speed, and position to
the GCI station, which
decides on further action,
consulting higher authority if
needed. Meanwhile, the
fighter will drop back.
The procedures for fighters
to turn an intruder out of
restricted airspace or to force
the intruder to land, are also
internationally recognised.
To signify that the intruder
has been intercepted the
fighter will overtake and posi-
tion in front and to the left of
it, in clear sight of the cock-
pit. By day the fighter will
rock its wings and make a
slow left turn on to the
desired heading. If the
intruder understands this
instruction it will rock its
wings and follow the fighter.
By night the fighter will flash
its landing lights and then
turn left; the intruder

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entered the airspace of the
Soviet Union over the
Kamchatka

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from the direction of the
Pacific Ocean mid then for
the second time violated
USSR airspace over
Sakhalin Island on the
night of August 31/
September I. The aircraft
did not have navigation
lights, did not respond to
queries. and did not
contact the dispatcher
service (ATC).

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aircraft defence, sent to the
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the intruder aircraft did
not react to tin- signals and
warning
fighters and continued in
the direction oi the Sea of
Japan."

FLIGHT International. 10 September 1983