

ABC NIGHTLINE

1 September 1983

KOPPEL: Good evening. I'm Ted Koppel, and this is Nightline. LARRY SPEAKES (Deputy Press Secretary): (at press conference) Words can scarcely express our revulsion at this horrifying act of violence.

KOPPEL: Tonight, the United States is still waiting for the Soviet Union to explain why it shot down a Korean jetliner with 269 people on board. On this broadcast tonight, we'll talk to a broad range of specialists on international relations, on the Soviet Union, its air defenses, and on international intelligence as we focus on what happened, how it happened, and what's likely next.

KOPPEL: If you were watching this broadcast last night, you probably went to sleep with the same impression we did: there had been some kind of a hassle between Soviet fighter jets and a Korean Air Line 747, but senior U.S. officials led us to believe, and we led you to believe, that the plane had landed safely on Soviet territory. Sadly, that was not true. The U.S. flag over the White House today, and over all federal installations and all official U.S. buildings around the world, flies at half staff. Two hundred sixty-nine passengers and crewmen aboard Korean Air Line's Flight 007 are missing and believed dead. The aircraft was shot down by a Soviet air-to-missile, air-to-air missile. The United States and South Korea have called for a special meeting of the U.N. Security Council tomorrow. Tomorrow, also, President Reagan cuts short his vacation and returns from California to Washington. He'll meet with his top security advisers and with congressional leaders tomorrow and over the weekend. From the president to the Congress to the families of those who were on board the downed jetliner, the reaction today was one of almost sickening shock. Some found it hard to believe that the Soviets had actually shot down an unarmed plane with so many passengers on board. Many who spoke of the incident were deeply moved with pain and with anger.

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KOPPEL: So far, at least, the Soviet government has acknowledged only that an airliner, an unidentified one, penetrated Soviet air space. They have not admitted shooting down the plane. Nor have they come close to expressing anything approaching regret. Joining us now live is the U.S. undersecretary of state for political affairs, Lawrence Eagleburger. Secretary Eagleburger, what do we know? Are we confident that the Soviet Union shot that plane down? EAGLEBURGER: Well, I think, Ted, the facts are absolutely clear. There is no doubt whatsoever, on the basis of evidence from a number of sources, that the Soviet air force shot down that Korean Airlines airplane. There's no doubt about that whatsoever.

KOPPEL: Give us, if you can, a thumbnail sketch of, of what happened to the best of the U.S. government's understanding and in what kind of a timeframe. EAGLEBURGER: Well, the time frame is, without the facts right in front of me is gonna be a little bit difficult, Ted.

KOPPEL: Roughly. EAGLEBURGER: But in effect, as the secretary said in his statement today, there is no question that the Korean Airlines plane was outside of its normal flight pattern and in fact over-flew Soviet territory. There is also no question about the fact that that plane was captured by Soviet radar for about two and a half hours. There were, at one time or another, eight Soviet aircraft up in the air, either looking for it or in fact later, unfortunately, finding it. There's no question at all about the fact that one Soviet aircraft, the one that in fact finally shot the plane, down came to within two kilometers of the Korean aircraft.

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KOPPEL: Let me, let me stop you for a second. EAGLEBURGER: Yeah.

KOPPEL: Because we are going to hear, a little later in the broadcast, exactly what Secretary Shultz says. So, maybe I shouldn't have asked you that. You are confident when it is said that a Soviet fighter visually made contact with that plane, saw the Korean Airlines plane? EAGLEBURGER: No doubt whatsoever.

KOPPEL: How close? EAGLEBURGER: Within two kilometers.

KOPPEL: Would they be able to identify from two kilometers away that this was a civilian airliner? EAGLEBURGER: Ted, I can't, you know, I can't answer it as an expert. I can simply say that a 747 is a rather obvious aircraft with obvious configuration. And clearly I think they had to know it was a 747, and I myself believe that at that distance they must also have known it was a civilian airliner.

KOPPEL: All right. EAGLEBURGER: I don't see any way to avoid that.

KOPPEL: A quick devil's-advocate question: Turn it around, a North Korean airliner headed for Havana, Cuba, intrudes American air space, might we not do the same thing? EAGLEBURGER: Absolutely not, and there's history to demonstrate this. For example, in 1983 there was a Cubana Airlines airplane over-flying the United States on its way to Canada, which went out of its flight path and over-flew a sensitive U.S. installation. What we did was warn them at the time and then pull their authority to over-fly the United States for a while. We have had at least three incidents--two with Aerofloat, one with the Cubana Airlines in the last several years. And in each case, we took no military action whatsoever. The record is clear on this.

KOPPEL: All right. If the record is also as clear as you say, that there's no question but that the Soviets shot it down, why do you think they're being so reluctant to admit what they did? I mean, they might not have to be apologetic about it, if they don't feel they should be. But why don't they at least admit what they did? EAGLEBURGER: Well, I can't put myself in the minds of the Soviet authorities.

KOPPEL: No, but help us to understand it a little bit. EAGLEBURGER: Well, you know, if anyone who knows the Soviets, I think, knows that this sort of an act, which ought to tell us something about the Soviet Union, by the way, but that this sort of an act, once it takes place, is not something that the Soviets are easily going to admit. I don't know that they will ever admit it. We may well find ourselves in a debate with the Soviets for some time on this issue. But this, it's just simply out of character for the Soviets to admit when they have done a dastardly deed of this sort.

KOPPEL: What does the U.S. government do about a thing like this? What, what kinds of options are available? EAGLEBURGER: Well, those are, you know, the decisions on what will be done are for the president to make. And my advice and that of those of us who are in the U.S. government is to give the president that advice in private. There are a range of options that he could, and indeed tomorrow I think will, be considering. We've done a great deal of work today to try to lay out those options for him. The secretary will be talking to him tomorrow, and the president will have to make those decisions. I can't make them, obviously, for him. But there are a range of things that can be done. The first step we have obviously taken is that we are going to the UN Security Council in association with the, the Koreans tomorrow, to

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present a resolution and to try to get out on the table for public debate the facts of this case. That's one step we have clearly taken now. There are other steps that we can take, but those are for the president to decide.

KOPPEL: This question clearly has nothing to do with humanity. It has nothing to do with morality, but strictly from an internationally legal point of view, were they within their rights shooting that plane down? EAGLEBURGER: Well, as long as you understand that I'm not an international lawyer. Nevertheless, in having looked at this in some detail today, I think it is absolutely clear that they were far outside the bounds of international law. If, if nothing else, no one could argue that that aircraft presented any sort of a threat to the Soviet Union. And under those circumstances, the response of the Soviets was totally outside of any human interest. It was outside of international law. Clearly they had a right, and there are rules about this in international law of how they can challenge the aircraft, how they can indicate that it should land and so forth. But they have no right to shoot it down under these circumstances.

KOPPEL: On some of the maps that are in the cockpits of these commercial airliners--and I guess we'll be looking at one of those maps a little later on--in a box, ironically, just under Sakhalin Island, there is a little warning that says, 'You should know that if you move into this area you may be shot down.' I mean, clearly this is not something that, that should take an experienced pilot by surprise. EAGLEBURGER: Well, Ted, the first point is, I'm absolutely certain that the pilot of this aircraft did not over-fly Soviet territory on purpose. I can't explain how he was where he was, but obviously, there were some errors in navigation or something of the sort. But again, that's not the issue. Sure, he can read the map and see that the Soviets may shoot him down. That does not have anything to do with whether it is legal under international law. Nor, would the pilot deliberately and knowingly have gone there.

KOPPEL: All right, Mr. Secretary, still a great deal to talk about. Please indulge us and stand by for a couple of minutes. Since the Soviet Union has still failed to provide any detailed account of what happened to the Korean jetliner, just about all the information we have to date has come from U.S. officials. That information was provided in its most succinct form today by Secretary of State George Shultz. Here now is his description of how the plane was shot down. GEORGE SHULTZ (Secretary of State): At 14:00 hours Greenwich Mean Time yesterday, a Korean Airlines Boeing 747 en route from New York to Seoul, Korea, departed Anchorage, Alaska. Two hundred and sixty-nine passengers and crew were on board, including Congressman Lawrence P. McDonald. At approximately 16:00 hours Greenwich Mean Time, the aircraft came to the attention of Soviet radar. It was tracked constantly by the Soviets from that time. The aircraft strayed into Soviet air space over the Kamchatka peninsula and over the Sea of Okhotsk and over the Sakhalin Island. The Soviets tracked the commercial airliner for some two and one-half hours. A Soviet pilot reported visual contact with the aircraft at 18:12 hours. The Soviet plane was, we know, in constant contact with its ground control. At 18:21 hours, the Korean aircraft was reported by the Soviet pilot at 10,000 meters. At 18:26 hours, the Soviet pilot reported that he fired a missile and the target was destroyed. At 18:30 hours, the Korean aircraft was reported by radar at 5,000 meters. At 18:38 hours, the Korean plane disappeared from the radar screens. We know that at least eight Soviet fighters reacted at one time or another to the airliner. The pilot who shot the aircraft down reported after the attack that he had in fact fired a missile, that he had destroyed the target and that

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he was breaking away. About an hour later, Soviet controllers ordered a number of their search aircraft to conduct search and rescue activity in the vicinity of the last position of the Korean airliner reflected by Soviet tracking. One of these aircraft reported finding kerosene on the surface of the seas in that area.

KOPPEL: The kind of detail that you've just heard from the secretary of state has to be based on some pretty firm information. When we return, we'll look at how intelligence agencies got that kind of information on the Korean Airlines incident. We'll also talk live with former CIA director Admiral Stansfield Turner, as well as two former deputy directors of the CIA. And later, we'll talk with the wife of Congressman Larry McDonald of Georgia. Congressman McDonald was, of course, aboard the downed Korean jetliner and is now presumed dead.

KOPPEL: Before we continue, I have some late wire copy on a related story. Apparently this just happened. A Soviet Aeroflot jet landed without incident at Mirabelle International Airport near Montreal after a security alert was ordered. Canadian officials ordered the alert after an anonymous telephone threat was reported, saying that the Aeroflot jet would be destroyed in retaliation for the South Korean incident. In addition, the Canadian Airlines Pilot Association said it would consider asking Ottawa to refuse landing rights to Soviet flights to Canada. The Korean jetliner was shot down at approximately 2:30 Eastern Time yesterday afternoon. Secretary of State Shultz gave his detailed briefing, which you heard a couple of minutes ago, on the incident at about 10:45 this morning. How did U.S. intelligence gather and confirm its information in the intervening hours? Here's a report from Jack Smith.

SMITH: Korean Airlines has been flying 747s across the Pacific for 10 years. U.S. intelligence officials don't know just why yesterday's flight went astray, but they do know what happened when it did and right down to the last detail. The route over the Pacific to Seoul, South Korea, normally skirts Soviet territory, but yesterday, though on the right arc was inexplicably at least 100 miles off course. It flew into Soviet airspace over the Kamchatka peninsula and entered it again over Sakhalin Island, where it was shot down two and a half hours after appearing on Soviet radar and fell into the Sea of Japan. But if U.S. intelligence had this information, why did U.S. officials not react sooner? RICHARD BURT (Asst. Secretary of State): That information was picked up through various sources. It had to be filtered. It had to be translated. And we were not able to form a firm judgment on the fate of the aircraft, as I said, until early this morning.

SMITH: In fact, U.S. officials, like Burt, say they didn't even know the plane might have been shot down till yesterday evening, and the president wasn't told till 10:30 p.m., eight hours after it went down. What happened? U.S. intelligence nowadays uses sophisticated spy satellites to gather information. But they're also listening posts on the ground, at sea and in the air, 2,000 worldwide. A high proportion are in the Western Pacific, with listening posts in the Aleutian Islands, Japan, South Korea and it is generally believe northern China as well. The area is important. The Soviet fleet is in *Vladyvostok. Kamchatka peninsula is an impact area for Soviet missile tests. And the entire Soviet Eastern defense system is there as well. It was Soviet pilots from this command who shot down the Korean airliner. And it was their conversations with their Soviet ground controllers that gave U.S. intelligence such a clear picture of what happened. The U.S.'s latest listening system, called Cobra, can be mounted on ships or put in aircraft. Its only limitations are the horizon. So, even mounted on the ground it can hear radio traffic for hundreds of miles. There is no doubt U.S. monitoring stations picked up yesterday's Soviet radio traffic right away. In fact, one source today claimed the national security agency was even

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listening in from its headquarters outside Washington, D.C., via satellite as the tragedy occurred. This couldn't be confirmed but even if true does not mean intelligence officials there or in the Pacific actually knew what was happening. Some analysts today speculated that the information was delayed by being recorded automatically by computers. U.S. intelligence routinely uses computers to digest the mounds of raw Soviet radio, Telex and phone traffic it picks up each day. But most intelligence experts believe that in a critical area like the Western Pacific, Soviet air activity, radar and radio, would have been monitored by humans. And there are two explanations of why it took them so long to react. White House spokesman Larry Speakes provided one of them today when he told reporters privately that some information came through Japanese intelligence. 'You have to keep in mind,' said Speakes, 'that we were translating from Russian to Japanese to English. And it seemed such an incredible incident that we were very careful in our reporting and were rechecking and rechecking again to be sure that we had not misinterpreted anything.' The problem of translating and the human element. But analysts point to another reason. VOICE OF UNIDENTIFIED AIR FORCE PILOT: (Inaudible).

SMITH: That's how a U.S. Air Force pilot sounds. Even in English, it's sometimes hard to make out what's being said, because pilots speak in jargon and code words. Soviet jargon is even harder. Even with the best listening device, reception is also often poor. Analysts believe that many words in the to and fro between the Soviet pilots and their controllers would have been lost, leaving listeners to guess at precise meanings after events had already taken place. BURT: We only learned that the aircraft had been shot down hours after the fact. And as soon as, as we learned, though, that the aircraft might be in trouble, we did get in touch immediately with the Soviets.

SMITH: But that was still hours too late to save the 269 passengers and crew who were aboard that Korean airliner. This is Jack Smith for Nightline in Washington.

KOPPEL: With us now live in our Washington bureau is Admiral\Stansfield\Turner, director of the Central Intelligence Agency under President Jimmy Carter. Joining us from Seoul, South Korea, Ray\Cline, a 30-year intelligence veteran and former CIA deputy director and from our affiliate KVUE in Austin, Texas, Admiral\Bobby\Inman, former deputy director of the CIA and former director of the National Security Agency which monitors international communications. Admiral Inman, in a sense it must make every intelligence officer's skin crawl a little bit when a secretary of state gives the kind of detailed analysis that Secretary Shultz gave today. How much does that reveal to our adversaries? INMAN: Mr. Koppel, you always cringe when sources and methods are being exposed. But there are situations that are of sufficient gravity that those who have the authority to declassify, the principal officers of government, make the decision to do so. I must say this morning, as from a distance uninvolved I watched the process unfold, I was pleased that the decision was made to announce that it occurred rather than letting leaks be the way that facts dribble out. My experience has been that when the leaks are the source, the damage to sources and methods usually is even worse.

KOPPEL: Admiral Turner, how do you feel on the same subject? TURNER: Well, I think I was shocked by the amount of detail that the secretary of state gave this morning, coincidentally, on the same morning that the news reported that the president had sent a memorandum to every member of the government in person, encouraging greater security. The secretary discussed these techniques in greater detail than I've ever heard before in public and certainly gave the Soviets a clear readout on just what those capabilities are in this particular area of the world.

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KOPPEL: Let's move on to precisely what happened. And Ray Cline, I'd like to begin with you. Are you satisfied that the orders for shooting that plane down did not originate at the scene? CLINE: It's clear that the, ah, pilot had to ask permission to fire, that they came from some higher headquarters. You probably know a special sort of war theater operational headquarters has been set up by the Russians in the Soviet East Asia, and it may, may have gone back that far. It could have gone to Moscow. But there was a request for permission.

KOPPEL: Let's bounce that round. First of all, Admiral Inman, you believe it went all the way back to Moscow? Because obviously, the implications, if Moscow gave the order, are considerably greater. I realize I'm asking you to speculate, but it's informed speculation, I would assume. INMAN: The Soviets have been spent enormous sums of money in their air defense system over the years. It's a system that puts a great deal of effort around all of the Soviet borders. There's a steady flow of information that goes to filter centers and back to Moscow itself. Given the description this morning that the events went on for longer than two hours and a half, I think there's no doubt that Moscow, as well as regional centers, were fully informed about what was occurring. Whether it was necessary to go that far back for authority to fire would be speculation. My own guess would be following the very poor performance of the Soviet air defense system during the '78 Korean aircraft intrusion that likely authority to fire may have been delegated much further out into the field.

KOPPEL: Let me ask you to expand on that just a little bit, because not all of our viewers may know what you're talking about. This was then the other Korean airliner penetrated as far as *Marmansk, didn't it? INMAN: It, the aircraft came in over the Arctic. It was headed to Paris. Again, on a sad navigation error penetrated Soviet territory and went very deep into the northern peninsula, finally was intercepted, then took evasive action. My recollection of the debriefing from the pilots, they took, ah, evasive action, were fired on and finally landed on a frozen lake. It was very clear in the aftermath that the Soviets were very unhappy with the performance of their defense system. And unfortunately, some leaks in the U.S. that were printed in the media took some substantial pleasure in the poor Soviet air defense performance. All of that is likely to have led to tougher Soviet approaches for any intrusions in the future.

KOPPEL: Admiral Turner, that happened on your watch. So, ah, let me have your analysis of what that incident, what role that incident may have played in yesterday's shooting down of the, of the Korean airliner. You, you agree with what Admiral Inman just analyzed for us? TURNER: Yes, I agree generally with what Bobby Inman said. I think we should also take into account while it doesn't condone what the Soviets did, that it must have made them more suspicious today when a Korean airliner, for the second time, penetrated deeply into their airspace. They must have a paranoia about this kind of thing, because we watched them react so violently over many years to any kind of intrusions. But here they are doubly suspicious when it's the same country, the same kind of airline, doing the same kind of thing in a different part of the world.

KOPPEL: Well, I suppose that, ah, I mean part of the reason that it's happening clearly is in order to get to Seoul from Anchorage, Alaska, you have to pass fairly close to Soviet territory. Why would they be particularly suspicious of the Koreans? TURNER: Well, as I say, when the Koreans, five years ago, went a thousand miles into Soviet territory, then had done it again this time, I think that makes them suspicious. But beyond that, Ted, for decades now we've seen intense reaction by the

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Soviets. Usually, of course, it's been military aircraft that have come close to their borders, and they've reacted against them. They've had some shoot-downs and so on. They just have a very strong feeling about this kind of thing. It's not, ah, again, condoning what they're doing, but it is part of the Soviet makeup, the Soviet psychology.

KOPPEL: Ray Cline, pick up on the same subject. CLINE: Yeah.

KOPPEL: And then I'd like to ask you something about the Korean (inaudible). CLINE: Well, I, I, I, I certainly don't agree with Stan Turner on that. I think they, ah, there is no excuse for shooting at this civilian airline. They knew what it was. They called it a Korean airline, and those flights go regularly. If they have a right to shoot down any civilian aircraft that gets a little off course and goes into their territory, it's international piracy. It's international chaos. So, I don't think we should, ah, make excuses for them. I think it shows that the, the Russians are tough and determined to keep their military perimeter protected, and they don't give a damn who gets hurt in the process. And that's a signal for us. And I think we oughta recognize it as such and, ah, deal with it in a diplomatic and political way. But, ah, we cannot make excuses for the Soviet behavior, in my opinion.

KOPPEL: All right, gentlemen, let me, ah, let me just ask one more question and go around once quickly, and then we'll take a break. Part of what was overheard is that the Soviets did indeed, I forget now whether it was the ground controller—I believe it was—did indeed try to communicate with the pilot of the Korean airliner. For some reason or another he did not respond. Does anyone of you have an explanation for that? Ray Cline, why don't you begin? CLINE: There's no, there's no knowledge here of, ah, of what actually happened. But the attempt must have been fairly perfunctory. There are different types of identification systems. There may have been some incompatibility, but there is the voice. There were many ways to interrogate that plane if they'd really wanted to communicate with it.

KOPPEL: Well, what, what I'm saying, Admiral Inman, is that, ah, if we here in the United States, no matter for the moment how, manage to intercept the attempt by the Soviets to contact that Korean, why shouldn't he have heard it, and why didn't he respond? INMAN: First, the likelihood that the Russian pilot would be speaking in Korean is remote. So, you've got a barrier....

KOPPEL: No, I'm not talking about the Russian pilot. I'm talking about ground control, and one would assume that they're, I don't know, what language is used in international air traffic? INMAN: That's not doubt Russian. English is the international language for air traffic control. But when you talk about an attempt to communicate with a Korean aircraft, you're talking about from the fighters that are there, not from the ground. So, you've already got a language problem. Secondly, most of those communications are done by visual signals. In the daytime it's fairly easy to do. At nighttime it's very difficult at all to do it. So, the odds are very high that those poor Korean pilots, one, did not know they were off course and two, did not understand, therefore, the nature of the approaches that were being made on the aircraft.

KOPPEL: Admiral Turner, I've done a little reading on the subject. And apparently that's one of the basic things that every commercial pilot and non-commercial pilot, for that matter, is taught. If a fighter plane comes in front of you, even at night and starts flashing its lights on irregularly, dips its wings, that means follow me. Why wouldn't the man know, why wouldn't the Korean pilot know what was involved?

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TURNER: That's certainly difficult to divine, because it would have been clear. But in the incident in 1978 we discussed previously, Ted, the same thing happened. The pilot did not respond, apparently, to the movements of the Soviet aircraft in trying to get him to land. Let me just add that, ah, I do agree with Ray Cline that there is no excuse for this kind of shoot-down, and I didn't mean to in any way apologize for the Soviets in that regard. But I do think you have to take into account that the Soviets are doubly suspicious when this same airline does the same thing to them twice.

KOPPEL: All right, gentlemen, let's take a break. We'll continue our discussion in a moment, as we consider why the Soviets might provoke an incident so certain to be condemned around the world. Later tonight, we'll look at the problems and dangers faced by airline crews when they fly so close in sensitive and restricted airspace. And we'll talk with Kathy McDonald, whose husband, Georgia Congressman Larry McDonald, was aboard the Korean jet when it was shot down.

KOPPEL: The question, given the absolute certainty of international condemnation, why would the Soviet shoot down an unarmed passenger jet, even if it had entered Soviet airspace illegally? Joining our other guests now live in our Washington bureau, Malcolm Toon, former U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, also here in Washington, ABC News Moscow bureau chief Bob Zelnick. He is currently in the United States on home leave. And still with us, undersecretary of state Lawrence Eagleburger. Ambassador Toon, you know the Soviets as well as anyone. Why in heaven's name would they do something like this? TOON: Thank you for the compliment, Ted. I'm gonna have to say that I really don't know. I, ah, I agree with others who have said earlier this evening that there's no possible excuse for this sort of behavior on the part of the Soviets. I understand their, their, ah, ah, sensitivity about that, that part of their terrain out in the Far East. But to shoot down an unarmed civilian airliner, I think, there is no justification for that at all, in my view.

KOPPEL: Well, there can't be any justification for it, and I'm really not asking for justification. I'm trying to understand motivation. Can you think of any? TOON: No, I can't. I, I think it's absolutely without any justification and no excuse for it at all.

KOPPEL: Bob Zelnick, you and I have talked many times in, in my discussions with you about the Soviet Union, about Soviet paranoia. Is that possibly at the route of this? ZELNICK: Well, it's certainly a strong contributing factor. When you ask why would they do it in the face of universal condemnation, I don't think that their ultimate priority is avoiding condemnation, particularly by nations they regard as adversaries. Their ultimate priority is protecting their own borders. And particularly at this time of very high tensions they have been painting the world as a grim and threatening place. They've been painting their own borders as rimmed by adversaries and enemies. They've been painting an American administration which is anxious, as they say, to reverse historical processes and bring down the motherland of socialism and gear up for what they charge is first strike potential and an ability to, ah, rule the world by dictat. Now, when they quibble with this interpretation, when they even challenge the integrity of those making the interpretation, but it takes on the ethic of the society when it is repeated day in and day out as it has been been in the Soviet press and in statements by Soviet leaders.

KOPPEL: You're telling me that even the leaders who may realize that some of this rhetoric is a little inflated, that sometimes they begin to believe their own rhetoric? ZELNICK: Whether they believe it in their heart of hearts is a judgment that no journalist is equipped to make and very few individuals are equipped to make.

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I don't know what they believe in their heart of hearts. I don't know what we believe in our heart of hearts when some of our leaders make simliar charges about the Soviet Union. I do know that it has a way of reinforcing itself, of influencing the conduct of officials and particularly in a highly bureaucratized society, like the Soviet Union, of becoming engrained in the procedures in dealing with incidents such as this penetration by the South Korean aircraft.

KOPPEL: Secretary Eagleburger, let me come back to you and raise something else that Bob Zelnick was saying to me earlier in the evening. The Soviets are always the ones that depict this government, this administration in particular, as the cowboys, the wreckless folks with the hand always on the six-shooter. Why, then, are they so wreckless? EAGLEBURGER: Well, in the first place, they're wrong in their description of us. But in the second place, again, you've asked the same question in a different way--why are they so wreckless? How do you explain the inexplicable, Ted. I think, I said earlier on this program I think this incident shows us something about the Soviet Union. They're consumed by this desire for secrecy, and I think that's probably a part of, of trying to explain to the degree anybody, any sane person can, this reaction. It's a closed society. It is everything Mr. Zelnick says it is. I think it's always dangerous, by the way, to believe that Soviet leaders don't believe what they say. It's, it's a closed society. It's consumed by its desire for secrecy. It is paranoid in many ways, and I think these all add upto, ah, as I have to admit, an unsatisfactory explanation of an insane and hideous act, for which nobody in the West, I think, can ever give an adequate explanation.

KOPPEL: Ambassador Toon, I believe you were ambassador to Moscow in 1978, when the last incident happened, that is when the last Korean airliner penetrated Soviet airspace and was also shot, not with the same horrible consequences. What was going on at that time from which you can instruct us in what's going on now? TOON: Well, I think the, ah, the thing that really surprised us about that incident was the fact that the Soviet defense forces reacted so sluggishly to the penetration of the airspace by, ah, by the Korean airliner. They were almost a thousand miles inside the Soviet Union before there was any reaction at all. And I suspect that after that happened, there was a, a very careful look at their command and control system. And I think probably one of the reasons why this sort of thing happened was that those, those control systems had been tightened to the point where, ah, ah, this sort of thing might possibly be explained.

KOPPEL: I've asked this question of others on this broadcast tonight, but I haven't asked you, Ambassador Toon. Do you think the order came from Moscow directly? TOON: I, ah, I really don't know, Ted. I, obviously, it came from higher authority. Whether it had to go all the way back to Moscow, I just don't know. We have assumed in the past that any act that was calculated to impact negatively on relations with Washington had to have fairly high approval, probably a the Politburo level. But whether that's in this category, I just don't know.

KOPPEL: All right, gentlemen, when we come back, and we will in just a moment, I wanna talk about what long-term effect there may be on U.S.-Soviet relations. We'll continue this discussion in a moment.

KOPPEL: We have an extraordinary reservoir of expertise at our disposal here, so what I'd like to do is go once all the way, quite literally, around the world and ask the question, 'what do you think is going to happen in terms of U.S.-Soviet relations in the mid-range, in the next three, six months, the next year?' Senator Helms? HELMS:

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Well, Ted, I would think that would depend on what President Reagan does in terms of leadership. And I think that he's sufficiently exercised about this tragic episode to, uh, to have some influence with Congress. I wanna see what the Foreign Relations Committee will do, some of the apologists for the Soviet Union in the past. But all in all, I think you'll see a review, a reassessment of our total relationship with the Soviet Union. And I think that's long overdue because up to now we really haven't been realistic.

KOPPEL: Secretary Eagleburger, let me jump back here to Washington. It's going to be your problem as much as anyone's. I'm not talking now about the options. I know you won't talk about the options. But I would like to get your assessment of what the long-term effect will be. Is there a long-term effect with an incident like this?

EAGLEBURGER: Oh, I don't think there's any question about it, Ted, that an act like this cannot help but have an influence on our relationship and on our attitude toward the Soviet Union. I don't deny, in fact, I wouldn't try to deny, that it's going to have an impact. I think the only thing I would say is that as we think through that impact and how we ought to deal with it, we need to understand as well that we still have to deal with the Soviet Union. It is the other superpower, it is on this planet with us. And while we can regret this act, we can think it is hideous, and we can take whatever actions the president decides are necessary, that is not the point. But we must remember in this, at the same time, we are going to have to deal with and live on the same planet with the Soviet Union.

KOPPEL: Senator Helms, you buy that? HELMS: Well, uh, I just consider it to be a crime against humanity if we do not respond to this in a way to bring together the civilized nations of this world in reaction to this, this tragedy.

KOPPEL: All right. Let me go to our three intelligence experts for a moment now. It is sometimes forgotten in the flush of excitement over how you get information that once you've got it, you've gotta analyze it. I'd like you to analyze it in terms, now, of what the mid-term, long-term U.S. relationship is going to be. Admiral Turner? TURNER: I think this will give us an opportunity to tell the world what the Soviet Union is really like. I don't think it will change our relationship drastically because we've known what the Soviet Union is really like all along. Five years ago they came very close to doing exactly this same thing. And I certainly agree with Ambassador Eagleburger that we have to get along with the Soviets on this planet and we've got to negotiate with them. I think a major factor in the Soviet calculation was that it will blow over, that they can deter other people from penetrating their territory by this extreme action that they have just taken. And, therefore, they think they can weather the adverse publicity that they'll get in the short term.

KOPPEL: Admiral Inman, they've certainly been right about that in the past. Uh, when 100,000 Soviet troops moved into Afghanistan--outrage, Poland--outrage, and what do we do? Under the Carter administration the president recommended lighting candles in the window. President Reagan, at least, uh, to date, has recommended lowering the flag to half mast. Will anything ultimately be done? INMAN: Well, over the past two years the Soviets have been conducting a very skillful propaganda campaign, particularly in western Europe, to display themselves as the peacemakers, to show the U.S. as the great threat to the outside world. What we've seen today is the real Soviet Union. Now, that's going to have an impact, uh, on public opinion in Western Europe as well as in this country. Some very well-meaning people who hoped that, uh, that if we led the way by unilateral moves, the Soviets would follow, I hope will now reassess their stands. Well, once we get rid of the wishful optimism, the fact remains that we have to deal with Soviets. But we deal with them for our own self-interest, not because we

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like them, anything about them, or the way they do anything. Uh, that, I presume, the decision recently on the grain deal was because it was in our own self-interest. Uh, we'll continue arms control discussions because trying to make progress there is in our own interest. But hopefully it will bring some more realism and maybe it'll make it a little easier to get a consensus in this country and in Western Europe about tough measures we have to take in the national security front day by day in dealing with the Soviets.

KOPPEL: All right. Admiral (sic) Toon, Bob Zelnick, Larry Eagleburger, Admiral Toon first, I'd like for you to consider for a moment this question. TOON: It's ambassador, not admiral.

KOPPEL: I beg your pardon. We've got so many admirals here that sometimes I get carried away. Ambassador Toon, what do you think is going on inside the Kremlin right now. What do you think is going within the top leadership of the Soviet Union? What are they talking about? TOON: Well, I would hope there'd be some soul-searching going on inside the Politburo, and I would hope, frankly, that they would come up with a satisfactory explanation for this terrible act in Korea. Let me just reinforce what Larry Eagleburger has said, and others have said, Ted. I think in, over the long term, we've got to have a relationship with Moscow, no matter how badly they misbehave, which will permit us to carry on a dialogue with them and prevent misperceptions by one of (sic) the other. But in the short term, I think we've gotta make clear to them that we cannot carry on as usual, business as usual, so long as they're misbehaving in this way. And in this respect, frankly, I disagreed with, uh, Secretary of State Shultz today when he said that, uh, he would go forward with the meeting with Gromyko. I think that oughta be put on the shelf until the Soviets come back with a satisfactory explanation.

KOPPEL: You're talking about the scheduled meeting in Madrid next week? TOON: That's right, yes.

KOPPEL: Bob Zelnick, what's going on in Moscow right now? I realize that's, that's an impossible question to answer, but let's hear some informed speculation. ZELNICK: Ted, I think as with any sane national leadership, the people in the Kremlin are tonight, or tomorrow morning, as the case may be, are wondering how to limit the damage from this, uh, very, very damaging episode, uh, for them. And I can't help but recall, uh, a similar incident, not involving the Soviet Union, but involving the State of Israel, uh, 10 years ago when they shot down a Syrian, excuse me, a Libyan passenger jet over the Sinai, and, uh, a day or so later, the prime minister, Golda Meir, number one, acknowledged that the Israeli jets had been the parties that shot down the plane. Number two, offered an explanation, self-serving though it may be, that involved, uh, ignoring warnings and signals, uh, on the part of the Libyan pilots. And number three, expressed deep regret over the incident and compassion for the victims and their surviving family members. And I think in a sense this incident can be a test of, uh, Yuri Andropov's sophistication, or his want of sophistication as a Soviet leader, in that he has to make not, not an abject mea culpa apology. But he has to recognize that facts are facts and that there is something relevant about world opinion and he has to address it, and address it truthfully.

KOPPEL: All right. Final question to Larry Eagleburger, because tonight, all three networks wanted to broadcast out of Moscow and they were given this lame excuse that the Moscow television studios were being, uh, worked on, there was some maintenance work being done there. They simply weren't available. It somehow suggests that

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behind that, that rather blunt, rather brutal we-don't-give-a-damn is some concern after all. Do you think that they are at all worried about what world reaction is going to be? EAGLEBURGER: Oh, yes, Ted, I don't think there's any question that they're worried about world reaction. And I think they've probably realized now that they are, in terms of world reaction, in deep trouble. I think they are, it may well be a test for Mr. Andropov. It's one that they thus far have flunked, I must say, in terms of the reaction so far today and the answer they gave us to our demand for an explanation. Uh, I think they're thinking right now about how they can limit the damage. I have real doubts in my own mind that they will be able to step up to this one and admit their culpability and apologize and act in the way that Mr. Zelnick described the government of Israel acted. But we can hope.