

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 81CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR  
7 June 1985

## BOOK REVIEW

## New pieces to Korean Air Lines puzzle

By Warren Richey

Washington

The crew of the Korean Air Lines commercial jet shot down by Soviet fighters in September 1983 may have provided false information to United States and Japanese civilian air traffic controllers during most of its unauthorized flight through strategic Soviet territory.

According to two books and recent new information about the tragic Anchorage-to-Seoul flight, the crew may have deliberately issued a series of false position reports in an effort to disguise the fact that the plane was consistently off its scheduled course.

The airliner, KAL 7, was eventually shot down by the Soviets over Sakhalin Island several hundred miles off course and 5½ hours into the flight, after having already overflowed a number of key Soviet military installations. There were 269 people aboard. The plane has never been recovered,

tween Soviets and military superiors on the ground monitored by US intelligence and released by the US State Department.

There is no indication to date that the pilot made any distress signal or ever acknowledged he was being pursued by a Soviet fighter, even though 5½ minutes elapsed after the tracer cannon and before the plane was shot.

The question is why? Most explanations attribute the tragedy to equipment failure, human error, or an attempt to carry out an intelligence operation.

Oliver Clubb, a Syracuse University professor, suggests in his book, KAL 007, The Hidden Story (Permanent Press, Sag Harbor, N.Y., \$16.95), that the Korean airliner was on a mission for the US National Security Agency. He says the intruding plane was used to cause the Soviets to think they were under an air attack and thus turn on their air-defense radar systems. This would enable the US and Japan — through nearby listening posts and surveillance aircraft — to monitor and assess the capabilities of the full range of Soviet air radar defenses.

He writes, "We can't expect the US National Security Agency to present us with a smoking gun; quite obviously those responsible for operations of this sort do everything possible to cover their tracks."

Clubb feels he has a "strong prima facie case suggesting that US governmental officials have been guilty of serious wrongdoing." He suggests that US officials, led by President Reagan and Secretary of State George Schultz, were "gambling with innocent lives" in an effort to perfect a strategy for a "decapitating" nuclear attack against the Soviet Union. He is calling for a congressional investigation.

Dallin, whose book is a more careful and reasoned analysis, is less willing to

## COMMENTARY

and there are no known survivors.

Alexander Dallin, a Stanford University professor and Soviet specialist, writes in his book, Black Box, KAL 007 and the Superpowers (University of California Press, Berkeley, \$14.95), that the plane reported to Anchorage it was flying at its authorized altitude of 33,000 feet. But according to the Soviets, when the plane entered Soviet airspace near Kamchatka it was flying at 26,250 feet, without having received authorization to change altitude.

"If the Soviet reports of KAL 007's altitude were accurate, this might constitute a solid morsel of evidence showing that the copilot — who could obviously read off the aircraft's correct altitude — was willfully providing false information in position reports," Dallin writes.

Japanese military radar reports released in Tokyo in March indicate the KAL pilot may have tried to mislead Japanese air traffic controllers when at 3:15 a.m. — 11 minutes before he was shot down — the pilot requested permission to climb to 35,000 feet from 32,000 feet. But after receiving authorization, Flight 7 actually reduced its altitude and then rose back up to 32,000 feet. The pilot reported his altitude as 35,000 feet. Japanese radar showed the plane at 32,000 feet.

Within moments of the pilot's reporting his "new" altitude to the Japanese, a Soviet jet fired a burst of tracer cannon shots across the plane's flight path, according to transcripts

of conversations be-

CONTINUED