

THE KAL 007 MASSACRE—LESSONS AND RESPONSE

The massacre by the Soviet Union of 269 innocent passengers and crew on Korean Airlines Flight 007 should not be a complete surprise. It is but the latest in a long series of actions that should grimly remind the world of the ruthlessness with which the Soviets are prepared to guard what they perceive as their security. It underscores their contempt for human life and world opinion, and betrays unmistakably the nature of the Soviet regime and the values guiding its leadership.

Setting off a wave of justified moral outrage around the world, this tragic incident confirms in stark terms what the Reagan Administration long has maintained--that the Soviet Union is "an evil empire," willing to use every available means to assert its power, spread its influence, export its despotism, subjugate people, and threaten world peace. This is the lesson of the KAL 007 massacre.

The Reagan Administration's realism about the nature of the Soviet Union contrasts sharply with the Carter Administration's naive view. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan jolted Carter and confronted his administration with the harsh reality of Soviet motives and methods. Yet Carter's angry reaction seemed prompted mainly by a feeling of personal betrayal by the Kremlin's leaders.

Over the years, the Soviets have systematically violated conventions and treaties which they had signed. Instead of being testimony to their good intentions, their actions offer an objective yardstick by which to judge actual Soviet conduct.

- * In 1968, the Red Army invaded Czechoslovakia to put down yearnings for political change.
- * Through the 1970s, the Soviets instigated violence in African countries, using Cuban proxies to enthrone and keep in power oppressive Marxist regimes.
- * In 1979, they invaded Afghanistan where some 100,000 troops have been slaughtering entire tribes and gassing innocent civilians.
- * They are furnishing outlawed biological weapons to Vietnam for use in Southeast Asia and are using such weapons themselves in Afghanistan.
- * They forced the crackdown on Solidarity and imposition of martial law in Poland.
- * They are training, equipping, and harboring international terrorists and openly support terrorist regimes.
- * They are stoking revolutionary insurrections in Central America and provide material support for Nicaragua's military buildup.
- * Soviet submarines repeatedly have intruded into Swedish and Norwegian waters to spy on military activities and to probe the anti-submarine defense of these countries.

- * Soviet airplanes regularly violate Turkish and Japanese airspace without triggering military responses from these countries.
- * Soviet spies are stealing U.S. and other Western technological secrets to make up for Soviet deficiencies and support the military buildup.
- * The Soviets have sustained the largest military buildup in history, even dwarfing Hitler's during the 1930s. Their buildup in the Far East has already given them clear superiority over any combination of adversaries.
- * They are violating the 1974 Threshold Test Ban by exploding underground nuclear weapons with yields in excess of 150 kilotons.
- * They are circumventing and violating the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and are gaining an advantage in missile defense that threatens U.S. security.
- * It is likely that they have been violating the SALT I Interim Agreement on strategic nuclear forces to gain an edge over the U.S.
- * They have ignored their promises under the 1975 Helsinki agreement, particularly those obliging them to respect the human rights of their citizens. Moscow imprisons or expels dissidents, denies visas to those anxious to emigrate, jams radio broadcasts and restricts the work of Western journalists.

This long (though incomplete) and widely acknowledged record of broken Soviet promises and measures that threaten peace is denied by Moscow--just as it denies any wrongdoing in shooting down the Korean jetliner.

This behavior raises serious questions about the confidence the U.S. can vest in arms control agreements as instruments of its security policy. At a minimum, it reinforces the need for ironclad verification procedures and intelligence capabilities commensurate with the task of uncovering Soviet duplicity and attempts to conceal treaty violations.

What should be the response to the KAL 007 massacre? So far, the Reagan Administration has reacted with tough talk but modest actions. Ultimately, a tougher response is required. Yet by not overreacting, the Administration has shown that it is not a knee-jerk approach to East-West relations and it has exuded prudence and statesmanship. Rhetoric, moreover, is important for it educates the American public to the true nature of the Soviet threat. A public so educated will be better prepared to support the increased U.S. defense measures needed to counter this threat. It is because Moscow respects only force that the American public and Congress must support a larger, more modern, more flexible, and more ready arsenal. As important, the dramatic evidence that Moscow does not play by the same rules as the West and does not hesitate to take innocent, civilian lives, demonstrates the great danger of the U.S. relying for its security on the nuclear balance of terror. Moscow thus cannot be trusted to play by the rules. Instead of relying on the Soviet Union not to attack, the U.S. should develop--as the Reagan Administration proposes--weapons that shield Americans by destroying approaching Soviet missiles.

In sum, the long-term response to the KAL 007 massacre is much more important than immediate measures--though such measures also are needed. The Administration should translate moral outrage into lasting political support for national defense, realistic arms control, anti-missile defenses, and countering of the Soviet threat to the Caribbean.

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