

*The following is excerpted from Rescue 007: The Untold Story of KAL 007 and its Survivors by Bert Schlossberg, Xlibris, 2001, Epilogue, with the author's permission. It has been slightly revised per instructions of the author.*

## **Is This the Final Word?**

### **Epilogue**

Twenty years have elapsed since the KAL 007 incident, and with the passing of time the memory of events has faded. Overtaken by more recent and broader global configurations, our outrage dissipates, and we forget what previously had provoked us to high moral indignation. Private anguish also diminishes, pushed into the recesses of our consciousness by the vitality of our present relationships with our children, our grandchildren, and our new friends. The pain diminishes, but it does not entirely disappear. The non-disappearance has the power to disrupt the placidity of our present by stark existential confrontations with ourselves.

The American husband of a Korean victim of KAL 007 brought his new wife to Israel in order to examine the claims for passenger survival. Could his first wife have survived? And was she alive now? He left evidently unconvinced, his heart doubtless in a turmoil of conflicting emotions. What if he had been convinced that his first wife had survived? How would that have affected his present marriage? Many of the other surviving spouses had remarried as well. This is the nature of all life-depriving catastrophes.

Life for the Soviet participants of the KAL 007 incident went on as usual, exhibiting what could be considered the normal vicissitudes of Soviet military and political status and career.

Major Gennadie Osipovich, the pilot of the Sukhoi 15 interceptor which shot down KAL 007, retired and, still a confirmed Communist, lives on a small farm in the Caucasus raising strawberries. He receives a small pension equivalent to \$150 a month and occasionally speaks in front of groups about the shootdown. He says of himself, "I am a lucky man!"

Air Force Marshall Petr Semenovich Kirsanov was demoted for his responsibility in the Soviet defense flap over Kamchatka. KGB General Romanenko was demoted, exiled, or executed—most probably for his oversights related to passenger and black box disposition.

Marshall Valentin I. Varennikov, who had arrived at Sakhalin Island within 24 hours of the shoot down in order to head the Secret State Commission and its cover-up, rose to become Deputy Defense Minister and Commander in Chief of the Ground Forces before his imprisonment (and subsequent release) for the part he played in the August 1991 coup attempt against Gorbachev. In 1994, the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation declared him "not guilty". On December 17, 1995, he was elected deputy of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Convocation. In January of 1996, he became Chairman of the Committee of the State Duma Veteran's Affairs.

General Ivan Moiseevich Tretyak and General Vladimir L. Govrov were both promoted to the Ministry of Defense in Moscow—the former as Deputy Minister of

Defense and Commander in Chief of Soviet Air Defense Forces (1991) and the latter as Deputy Minister of Defense for Civil Defense.



*Photo: General Ivan Mosevich Tretyak  
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Vladimir Kryuchkov was, at the time of the shoot down, head of the First Chief Directorate of the KGB. In that capacity, he interrogated Congressman Larry McDonald in Moscow. Kryuchkov went on to become head of the KGB. He participated in the 1991 coup attempt and was subsequently pardoned. He wrote a book about his experiences. A close personal friend and mentor of Russian President Putin, he attended Putin's inauguration in 2000 as his personal guest. Kryuchkov currently lectures from time to time.

Valery Vladimirovich Ryzhkov, on-duty commander of Radio-Technical Battalion 1845, which had tracked KAL 007's flight, and who was so bitter about his being passed over for promotion, was finally granted that promotion and made commander of the command post of Radio-Technical Battalion 2213 in Mariinskoe Settlement on the Amur river of the Soviet Primorsky (Maritime) opposite Sakhalin.

Lieutenant General Vladimir Kamensky, Commander of Soviet Far East Military District Air Defense Forces and "strategic" commander of the shoot down, made a lateral positional move at the breakup of the Soviet Union. He became Chief of Staff and Commander of the Ukrainian Air Defense Forces. It was on his watch that another civilian passenger plane was shot down—the Siber Air Tupolev 154 carrying 78 new immigrants to Israel on a flight from Tel Aviv to Novosibirsk. It was shot down over the Black Sea. In an interview prior to this latest shoot down, General Kamensky, commenting on the shoot down of KAL 007 opined that it could not happen again nowadays. But it did!

But the big winner in the long run (that is, the one who made the biggest jump) was General Anatoli Kornukov, commander of Sokol Air Force Base—the base from which Colonel Gennadie Osipovich's Sukhoi 15 took off in its fateful mission. As told in the words of the International Herald Tribune, January 24-25, 1998 edition:

*"Russian Who Doomed 007  
New Air Chief Ordered '83 Downing of KAL Flight  
Associated Press*

MOSCOW — The Russian Air Force acknowledged Friday that its new chief was the commander who ordered a pilot to shoot down a South Korean jet liner off Sakhalin Island in 1983, killing all 269 people aboard...<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Associated Press. *International Herald Tribune*, Saturday-Sunday, January 24-25, 1998

General Kornukov, who had retained his position when in 1976 a pilot under his command had defected to Japan with his MiG 25—the most advanced Soviet fighter of the time—also survived the KAL 007 incident, eventually attaining the highest appointment possible in his field of service—commander of the entire Russian Air Force. Of the many international newspapers which recorded Kornukov's new position, few, if any, noted the fact, so clearly evident in the Russian communiqués appended to the 1993 ICAO report, that Kornukov was but the low general on the totem pole, while those above him who had given Kornukov the order for the shoot down, some, by abdication to his will, were all, apparently, exonerated.<sup>2</sup> These were, in ascending order of their ranks at the time, General Kamenski—Commander of the Far East Military District Air Force, General Strogov—Deputy Commander of the Far East Military District, General Ivan Moiseevich Tretyak—Commander of the Far East Military District, and General Vladimir L. Govrov—Commander of the Far East Theater of Operations.

In the United States, by the early '90s, the steam had gone out of Jesse Helms' Committee on Foreign Relations Minority Staff and interest in KAL 007 soon ceased. This may have been connected to the dismissal by Senator Helms of eight committee members, including Minority Staff Leader Jim Lucier (who later became a senior editor with the conservative "Insight" magazine). Retired Rear Admiral "Bud" Nance, a childhood friend of Jesse Helms, had ordered the "house cleaning" - incidental to his assuming the position of Minority Staff Leader in place of Jim Lucier. In Admiral Nance's own words concerning the experience of commencing his new appointment, "It [the Committee] was a zoo to me. My military mind has got to have all the men and women in line."

Not only had interest in KAL 007 fizzled, but many activists and families connected with the POW/MIA cause likewise soon became aware of the Committee's extreme drop in interest in the cause they espoused. POW/MIA matters had become intertwined with KAL 007 matters with Senator Helms' writing to Boris Yeltsin requesting/demanding information concerning both matters. On December 5, 1991, Senator Helms had written to Yeltsin concerning the US servicemen. "The status of thousands and thousands of American servicemen who are [not 'were' - B.S.] held by Soviet and other Communist forces, and who were never repatriated after every major war this century, is of grave concern to the American people." Yeltsin would ultimately respond with a statement made on June 15, 1992, while being interviewed aboard his presidential jet on his way to the United States, "Our archives have shown that it is true - some of them [American POWs from the Vietnam war] were transferred to the territory of the U.S.S.R. and were kept in labor camps... We can only surmise that some of them may still be alive." (Yeltsin's "were transferred" and "may still be alive" was, within a matter of months, shamefully transformed by government officials into "might have been transferred" and "no evidence that they are still alive if they had been transferred".)

On December 10, just five days after Senator Helms had written Yeltsin concerning American servicemen, Helms would write to Yeltsin concerning KAL 007, "One of the greatest tragedies of the Cold War was the shoot-down of the Korean Airlines flight KAL-007 by the Armed Forces of what was then the Soviet Union on

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<sup>2</sup> The totem pole, most probably, extended through the political echelon up to Yuri Andropov, the Soviet Premier, but that has not, at this time, been verified.

September 1, 1983... The KAL-007 tragedy was one of the most tense incidences of the entire Cold War. However, now that relations between our two nations have improved substantially, I believe that it is time to resolve the mysteries surrounding this event. Clearing the air on this issue could help further to improve relations." Yeltsin would ultimately respond on January 8, 1993 by handing over to the International Civil Aviation Organization what the Russians had for so many years denied possessing, the subject of Soviet Naval deception of the U.S. Seventh Fleet - the vaunted and much sought after tapes of the KAL 007's "Black Box", the tapes from the Digital Flight Data Recorder and the Cockpit Voice Recorder. With this, the Russian Federation also handed over valuable real time-to-the-shutdown military communications chronicling and documenting not only the shutdown but also the sending out of Soviet rescue missions involving KGB coastal patrol boats, civilian trawlers then in the vicinity of Moneron Island, and "rescue" helicopters - within 1/2 hour of the shutdown! - leading to the abduction, as we have seen, of KAL 007's passengers and crew.

And now, with the change over of staff under Admiral Nance, the Committee on Foreign Relation Minority Staff's initiatives, in both POW/MIA and KAL 007 concerns, both still intertwined, came to a grinding halt. It may be that the U.S. had missed or let pass an unusual and short lived shift in Russian policy - a genuine openness on the part of Boris Yeltsin to "clear the air". This openness was not only shown by Yeltsin's admissions concerning POW/MIA and KAL 007 matters, but also, in the same 1992 time frame -the "window of opportunity", his admission that the April 2, 1979 anthrax outbreak at Sverdlovsk, about 850 miles east of Moscow, in which 94 people were affected, with 64 of these dying, had not been the result of contaminated meat, as the Russian government had previously maintained, but had been caused as a result of a mishap at a [biological warfare, b.s.] military facility.

By 1996, the State Department's official position in the matter of KAL 007's survival was quite clear—and quite official. To the many inquiries forwarded to the State Department by various senators to whom this author had given information relating to passenger rescue, State Department Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Wendy Sherman, gave the same response:

"In its final investigative report, ICAO concluded that KAL 007 was hit by at least one of two air-to-air missiles fired from a U.S.S.R. SU-15 interceptor aircraft. There was substantial damage to the aircraft which affected its controllability and the plane was destroyed upon impact with the sea. The wreckage of KAL 007 was located at 46° 33' 32" N - 141° 19' 41" E, 17 nautical miles north of Moneron Island in international waters at about 174 m. depth—over an area of about 60 x 160 m. The report concluded that there were no survivors. The U.S. government accepted the findings of the ICAO report, and believes that no credible evidence has been produced by anyone that contradicts or undermines its conclusions."<sup>3</sup>

"Undermines" is an interesting word in this connection. It implies that the very foundation, upon which a cohesive and stable structure has been erected, is itself being eaten or eroded away—or toppled. And indeed that sort of demolition is what a careful

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix F for full text (example letter to Senator Bob Graham) of State Department letters.

scrutiny would discern. Immediately after the shoot-down, the State Department apparently changed its position concerning Soviet claims to southern Sakhalin Island. This change is implied by State's Geographer's Office issuing a new official map of Sakhalin just three days after the shoot-down. This map had the boundary line dividing Sakhalin Island into north and south removed. The boundary line on State's old official map expressed the United States' recognition of the area north of the boundary line as sovereign Soviet territory, while south of the boundary was recognized as de-facto Soviet occupied, but Japanese-claimed territory. The United States had viewed the final disposition of the southern portion of Sakhalin Island to be decided by the signatory states to the Treaty of San Francisco.<sup>4</sup> In 1947, the United States had even sent a note to the Soviet Union rejecting the Soviet claims to southern Sakhalin.

Does not the elimination of the boundary line on the State Department's official map just three days after the shoot down imply a U. S.-Soviet deal, and could not the collusion expressed by this deal be a pervading factor influencing the conclusions of the United Nations' ICAO report? And would not our acknowledgement of this collusion "undermine" the very processes that led to ICAO's conclusions and that led ultimately to the final United States position on this matter?

What, then, of the passengers and crew? What about their disposition? Not as much as desired can be said about this matter—yet much more than is commonly imagined.

First, there are the anecdotes—difficult to assess, impossible to dismiss. Walter O'Reilly, President of Forget Me Not, the umbrella organization for various POW/MIA groups, the organization popularly associated with yellow flower distribution, reports that while on official business in the new Russian Federation, he was accosted at the steps of the former Lubyanka Central KGB prison by two men who surreptitiously said to him "We have your congressman." O'Reilly's response was a startled, "No, you don't," as he walked quickly away. He then realized that they must have meant Congressman Larry McDonald. He quickly returned to the steps but the men were gone.

A Christian minister in Long Island, New York, reports that while visiting Russia he had contact with a Russian pastor who claimed that he had been imprisoned for his faith with a group of people whom he believed were the American contingent from KAL 007. They had arrived at the prison the same week as the shutdown. Initially clothed in Western civilian attire, they presently donned the normal prison uniform. This Russian pastor now lives on the west coast of the United States and still has contact with the Christian minister in Long Island, but he refuses to say anything further about the matter, fearing for the safety of his relatives in Russia and for his own safety in the United States. Certain individuals have circulated among the Russian émigrés in his area warning them with threats lest they should ever speak of their prison experiences.

One mother of teenage children—passengers of KAL 007—reports that while on a business trip to China, she received a phone call from one of her children who

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<sup>4</sup> The signatories to the Treaty of San Francisco were to make their determination in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Portsmouth—provisions concerned with assigning areas to Japan's sovereignty.

immediately hung up after telling her not to worry. This mother has no idea how her child located her at her hotel room, but she has no doubts that it was her child.

Another woman, whose husband a computer specialist on board flight 007, received a phone call from an individual whose voice she immediately recognized as her husband's. But the call was abruptly cut off.

And then there is the strange and chilling tale of former Russian academician, David Stavitski, now residing in the United States. In an article published in *Aleph*, the Russian language US/Israeli publication<sup>5</sup>, Stavitski recounts that just three months after the shoot-down of KAL 007, while in the process of preparing for a conference of college teachers in the field of the effects of psychotropic drugs during combat, he had recourse to discussion with a medical colonel named Kodumov. Their discussion led to the use of parapsychology in altering perception. Kodumov informed Stavitski of a program begun at Serbsky Institute near Moscow, which was later adapted at the Sverdlovsk Institute for an experimental program called Adnure (parole).<sup>6</sup> Adnure was a program in which captured foreign national subjects were conditioned out of operating from their identities in order to become pliable agents of espionage to be returned to their home countries, responding in all ways as, for example, Americans, but faithful and obedient suppliers to their Soviet "handlers."<sup>7</sup> Kodumov informed Stavitski that he thought the KAL 007 passengers would be used for the Adnure program. What is startling is not that the KAL 007 passengers had been definitely placed at the Adnure project facility (they had not), but that a medical colonel associated with a scientific institute of the Soviet Union could suggest, as a matter of course, the real possibility of captured foreign nationals—among them the passengers of KAL 007—being found in such a horrendous program.

On February 24, 1995, Shifrin's Research Centre for Prisons, Psyche Prisons, and Forced Labor Concentration Camps of the U.S.S.R. published a memorandum including valuable information about the present whereabouts of the KAL 007 survivors—particularly the whereabouts of Congressman Larry McDonald.<sup>8</sup> The following are relevant excerpts from the memorandum:

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<sup>5</sup> "Will Project Adnure Be This Century's Secret?" David Stavitski, *Aleph* no. 606, 2-9 November, 1995, pp. 42,43.

<sup>6</sup> Serbsky Institute and Mental Hospital figuring in as a center for mind altering experiments receives startling confirmation from Emilia Cherkover, former Deputy of the Zelenograd Soviet and member of the Russian Federation Human Rights Commission. Cherkover maintains that, along with Vladivostok and Moscow prisons and the mental hospital in Oryal, microwave (psychotronic and electromagnetic application) experiments had been conducted between 1989 and 1990 at Moscow's Serbsky Institute

<sup>7</sup> Adnure seems to be a type of Soviet espionage training facility commonly known as "charm schools"—but with a parapsychological input. The typical charm school operation is currently being popularized (and fictionalized) through a recent book, *The Charm School*, by Nelson Demille (New York: Warner Books, 1988).

<sup>8</sup> On February 6, 1997, the published results of Centre investigations were conveyed to, among others, United States Congressman Robert K. Dornan (R-California, 46<sup>th</sup> District) while he was in Israel in connection with Israeli and Palestinian counterclaims to Hebron.

“United States Congressman, Dr. Larry McDonald, was taken by special convoy from Khabarovsk to Moscow and initially kept in the inner KGB prison of Lubyanka in Moscow. He was kept in complete isolation and when taken out of his ward for interrogation, was not called by his name but by ‘Prisoner No. 3.’ Following a number of questioning by KGB head Kruchkov, he was moved to the KGB prison of Lefortovo in Moscow.

“After several months of interrogation in Lefortovo, he was moved once again, this time to a special secret KGB ‘dacha’ (summer house) in Sukhanova near Moscow, where he continued to be interrogated... In approximately 1986—1987, Larry McDonald was transferred to a small local prison near the town of Temir-Tau (Kazakhstan).

“The attempts to locate the present whereabouts of Larry McDonald made by our people in 1993 yielded some results: through talking with the prison wardens of the prison located to the north of Temir-Tau, we learned that sometime in 1987, a prisoner looking like the one in the computer-aged picture of Larry McDonald<sup>9</sup> which was shown to them was brought to their prison from Karaganda by a special transport and was kept on the second floor of the prison building in strict isolation. Against all the regular rules, a table was put in his room and a spring mattress. A stronger than usual electric bulb was brought to the chamber. The food for that prisoner was delivered daily from a civilian restaurant rather than from the prison kitchen, and both the food and the white bread were given to him without the usual limitations—contrary to all prison norms. It was strictly forbidden for anybody to speak with this prisoner and he himself never tried to speak to anyone. For the obligatory daily walk in the prison yard, he was taken separately from all other prisoners. Once a week, a KGB officer would arrive from Karaganda in order to check up on the prisoner. Even this officer would not speak to the prisoner. He would merely inquire of the guard if the prisoner were well, if there had been any special occurrences connected with the prisoner, if anybody had tried to violate the special rules of his confinement.

“In 1990, sometime during the summer, the prisoner was taken by a special convoy in a prison van to the Karaganda transportation prison. Nobody knew then, nor knows now, who this special prisoner was; the envelope containing his file was sealed by the KGB and the prison administration could not open it. The only thing known to them was that the prisoner was to be kept there according to the instructions of the Moscow KGB. Thus far, all the attempts to obtain any additional information through the Karaganda prison have produced no results...”

Finally, much has been learned about camps—Gulags—that might possibly be prime locations for not only KAL 007 survivors, but also for POW/MIAs from the United States wars from as far back as World War II.<sup>10</sup> For example, Congressman Dornan had been informed by the Research Centre of an area of Tigre forest in the Amur River vicinity where three large concentration camps currently operate. Though these camps have never been visited by Westerners (or most probably by anyone else not positively disposed and intimately involved with the Soviet Communist prison system),

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<sup>9</sup> See computer-aged photo in Appendix G.

<sup>10</sup> See Moscow Bound: Policy, Politics, and the POW/MIA Dilemma (Eureka, CA: Veteran Press, 1993).

the immensity of these camps can best be appreciated by the fact that, in winter, smoke can be seen ascending from up to 90 chimneys while each barrack has two or three stoves—that is, this region alone has from 30 to 45 separate barracks!

The United States government, may, if it has the will, do something about this situation. A first step might be the use of NASA satellites to photograph high likelihood areas to determine whether certain concentration and forced labor camps (over 2,500 still remain throughout the former Soviet Union) are populated by foreigners or are “home” to Soviet nationals. Camps populated by Soviet nationals exhibit continual and cyclical prisoner releases, which provide for the buildup of prison towns in adjacent areas to the camps.<sup>11</sup> These towns are absent from the foreign prisoner camps as those prisoners are never released.

High-resolution photos from satellites thousands of miles in space are able to distinguish between full-sized and mini-vans, and are even able to pick up their license plate numbers. There are also powerful low altitude satellites that are capable of locating possible prison sites and making positive verification. One example is the “Code 467” satellite, better known as the Big Bird. “Built by Lockheed and first launched on June 15, 1971, the satellite is a massive twelve-ton, fifty-five-foot long spy station built around an extraordinary, super high resolution camera capable of distinguishing objects eight inches across from a height of ninety miles.”<sup>12</sup> Examples of the incredible capability of satellite imaging for nonconventional purposes (that is, nonmilitary purposes) are cited in the Wall Street Journal—an Arizona farmer was fined \$4000 by the Arizona Department of Water Resource for growing cotton without obtaining the required irrigation permit. Arizona state officials detected the irregularity by comparing their records of water use permits with photos obtained from the French government’s SPOT satellites which had photographed 750,000 acres of Arizona farmland.

Georgia state officials, which have used commercial satellite imaging for monitoring timber use and exploitation as well as for forest surveys, are contemplating a suggestion for the use of satellite photos “to look for objects as small as back yard porches, to check if homeowners have their construction permits in order.”

At present, it would cost \$6,500 for a satellite to photograph 10 square kilometers with about a 6-foot resolution.

Surely such technology could be put to use for the search and rescue of the 269 unfortunate men, women, and children, victims of what may have been the single most dangerous spark in this century’s tinderbox, the Cold War.

Whether by prayer, by recourse to the democratic institutions of pen and pressure, by appeal to public official conscience, or national sense of decency, or by all of these together, the place may be found to wedge a fulcrum and move this recalcitrant world of ours.

Exie’s father and cousin, Tay and Edith, Todd’s and Alicia’s mother Becky, Olivia’s and Alexander’s father and Olga’s husband, Jan, Tomas’ and Margaret’s

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<sup>11</sup> In most cases, the families of Soviet ex-prisoners were required to join them in these prison towns rather than the ex-prisoners being allowed to return to their original homes.

<sup>12</sup> See discussion in The Puzzle Palace, James Bamford, Penguin Books, New York, 1983, pp 259, 260



daughter Mary Jane, the entire Grenfell family including Noelle, and "little Stacy", Kyung Hwa Park's husband Han Tae, Beatrice Hurst's daughter Francis, Harold's and Lenore's daughter Dianne and grandson Sammy, and all the rest, are worth it.

Jessie Helms would later write Boris Yeltsin, "This event had an element of a personal catastrophe for me, since I was on the parallel flight that night on KAL-015, which departed Anchorage, Alaska about fifteen minutes after KAL-007. Both flights stopped in Anchorage for refueling. I shall never forget mingling with the doomed passengers of KAL-007 in the transit lounge, including two sweet young girls who waved goodbye to me when they were called to return to their fatal flight." Those two girls were Noelle and Stacy Grenfell. How can we sit and do nothing!

"XIII CONCLUSION:

KAL 007 PROBABLY DITCHED SUCCESSFULLY, THERE MAY HAVE BEEN SURVIVORS, THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN LYING MASSIVELY, AND DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS NEED TO BE MADE TO RETURN THE POSSIBLE SURVIVORS."

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