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SUBJECT Korean Airline Shot Down By Russians

JOEL SPIVAK: Well, even now there are questions that people have in their minds about what really happened out there when that Korean Airline 747 was shot down by the Russians. And sitting here with me this morning is retired Major General Richard Romer, who was with the Canadian Air Force for many years. He was a combat pilot in World War II and rose to the rank of Major General.

Now, General, do you remember where you were when you first heard about this thing?

MAJOR GENERAL RICHARD ROMER: I can't say that I do remember exactly where I was. But I do remember that the first reports that I recall were to the effect that the aircraft, the 747, was overdue. Then the next one was that it was on an island, an island called Sakhalin Island. And, of course, that report was very quickly converted into something else when...

SPIVAK: Excuse me, General. You mean you heard it was forced down on Sakhalin.

GENERAL ROMER: On Sakhalin Island. That was the first report that had come out. And I don't know what the source of that report was to this day, and I don't think it's particularly important. Because on September the 1st, in the morning here, Secretary Shultz gave his famous press conference where he startled everybody by reciting times, the whole incident, and establishing for the world that the aircraft had been shot down. And, of course, he had at that point the tapes that the Japanese maritime agency had produced of the Soviet fighter pilot talking to the ground and taking his instructions and advising them as to what he was doing.

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So, from that point on, we knew that the aircraft had not landed on the Soviet island of Sakhalin, to the northwest of Hokkaido, the Japanese island, but it had in fact been shot down.

SPIVAK: Okay. Now, let's deal with some of the wild stuff first here, General. There are a lot of people who honestly and truly believe that the Korean Airlines 007 747 --and keep in mind -- I'm sure you all know it, but I'll just say it anyway. There were 269 people were killed on that thing.

There are people, General, listening right now who honestly and truly believe that that plane was on a spy mission. What do you think?

GENERAL ROMER: Well, I know that there are a lot of people who think that because there are a lot of people who listened to the Russian side, the Russian defense of what they had done. The Russians, immediately the word was out from Shultz that they had shot it down, refused for a while even to admit that. But what they did was to start to fire back, because Secretary Shultz's language was very strong, the President's language which followed shortly thereafter was very strong. So the Soviets started to fire back through Tass. And right from the beginning their position was that this aircraft was on a spy mission for the CIA, for the American government, and therefore the American government was responsible for the 269 people being killed.

Now, that's been the Soviet line right the way through. And they mounted this counterpropaganda war immediately after the event. It really reached its peak when the Soviet Union produced their chief of staff, the top military man -- his name is Marshal Ogarkov -- at a press conference, which was unprecedented, on September the 9th, only nine days after the event. And for the first time in living memory, they produced a man of great substance and stature in the Soviet Union. And he was at one time responsible for Soviet military disinformation, one of the world's most professional liars.

SPIVAK: [Laughter]

GENERAL ROMER: And Ogarkov made a dramatic presentation which reached every television set in the United States almost instantly. And what he did was to produce a case whereby he substantiated the fact that this aircraft was on a spy mission for the United States. And, of course, what he was saying was totally false. But he had two things going for him. First of all, his great stature and weight and his prestige as the top soldier in the Soviet Union, a very cool man in control of the situation. And he had in front of him television cameras from the great television networks in the Western World. And behind

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him at this press conference was a great wallboard and it had two drawings on it. One was a drawing which he pointed out and he followed on this drawing the track that he claimed was the track followed, the course followed by this 747 as it approached Sakhalin Island. And he showed a hook, a turn to the right, or west, that this aircraft had made so it could go over a military base on Sakhalin Island, and he followed this with a pointer. And his allegation was that this aircraft was obviously on a spy mission because it turned here to go over this particular place.

The next thing he had, off to the side, looked like a racetrack. And it, it turned out, was what he represented to be the tracks followed by the 747 just before it entered Soviet airspace as it rendezvoused with an American Air Force RC-135 electronic intelligence airplane. That was also false.

The first was false for the reason that if you follow the tapes of the Soviet fighter pilot who was following the 747 as it approached Sakhalin Island and he was getting ready to shoot it down, he kept telling his ground control, deputat, that the aircraft was following a course of 240, and it never changed. There's no turn at all.

The other one, the claim by Ogarkov of a rendezvous, came from an announcement by the President, President Reagan, on Sunday, September the 4th that there had been a 747 -- or there had been an RC-135 from Shemia (?) Island in the vicinity of the 747, the Koran 747, before it passed into Soviet airspace. And the President said it came no closer than 75 miles, it passed in front of the 747.

Now, the Soviets, up until that announcement by him, didn't know that the RC-135 was even in the area at all.

SPIVAK: What makes you so sure they didn't know?

GENERAL ROMER: Well, it's very simple. From September the 1st through to September the 4th, in the vitriolic propaganda battle that had started, the Soviets threw everything they could, every brick at the United States.

SPIVAK: But they never mentioned that airplane.

GENERAL ROMER: Never mentioned that airplane at all. Not even a hint. And if they had known it was there, they would have. They would have said so.

SPIVAK: Well, it's hard to believe they didn't know it was there. I mean their radar is pretty sophisticated. They must have been...

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GENERAL ROMER: But sometimes it doesn't go out that far. And on top of that, there's so much traffic out there, at a good distance away from their shorelines, that they would not record it or pay much attention to it. In any event, they would have used it if they had known.

The President, on this Sunday morning, had announced to the public at the same time as he was briefing the congressional leaders as to what was happening. And, of course, it came out. And then what Ogarkov and his team did was to seize on that information and within the five days produce this racetrack and the proposition that there had been a rendezvous.

SPIVAK: Well, look, you're an ex-fighter pilot yourself, General. And at the time, we had some people who are currently fighter pilots call up here -- I don't know where they were from, Andrews or someplace, and they were telling me that there's just no way that the Russian pilots that scrambled that day could possibly have mistaken, even in the middle of the night, the silhouette of that 747 for anything than what it was. They said tha was just a physical impossibility. They told me that, if necessary, they could have flown right down on top of that thing and turned on their landing lights and taken a look to see what it was. So there's just no way that they could have mistaken it for anything else but a passenger plane.

GENERAL ROMER: There's no question about that.

Let me just finish the other point. I do not, under any circumstances, believe that this aircraft was on a spy mission at all, period. It's a fabrication of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union got this message across to the American people. And that's why so many people in the United States believe that there was a CIA or government involvement.

Now, on the other point, I could not agree more. As I read the situation -- and being an old fighter pilot doesn't mean that I've lost all of my backward-looking concepts of how these things work. In my opinion, what happened was very simple. This had been going on before. This had happened before that these Korean aircraft, from time to time, had cut the corner. They had taken the Great Circle route from Anchorage to Seoul, and had gotten away with it -- and I think that this will be substantiated later on when they have to explain, Korean Airlines has to explain why they grounded 14 of their senior captains as a result of the investigation that followed this.

SPIVAK: Yeah, they did do that. I read that story in the New York Times.

GENERAL ROMER: So, what I believe happened was this:

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It was a sensitive night for the Russians. They were testing one of their new intercontinental ballistic missile rockets. They're going to mount 150 of them in the Kamchatka Peninsula targeted against Washington and other good places. They saw this aircraft coming. It came up on their radar screen at Kamchatka and immediately went on the operations board at Kalinin, which is just outside of Moscow. So the decision-making process was immediately there. They knew that the aircraft was a South Korean machine. They knew that it was a passenger civilian airliner. And as it went through Soviet airspace, they failed to catch it with their fighters dispatched out of Kamchatka. As it got down to Sakhalin Island, somebody -- and I think I know who it is. It's only deduction -- in Moscow made the decision that they would terminate this flight to teach South Korea a lesson. They had had enough of this. And so the decision was made to shoot the thing down.

Cannon was used first of all to attempt to hit it. The Russians later claimed that this was a warning, which is bull-roar. And then the pilot said, "No. I will try rockets."

Now, the key to this is that the Soviet pilot 805 did not report to the ground what it was he was seeing. And I agree with your young fighter pilots that in those circumstances, the pilot 805 could see the airplane quite clearly. He could have flown formation with it within 15 feet. He could have flashed his lights. He could have done all kinds of things. Instead of that, he did not identify to the ground, which indicates quite clearly that the decision was made before he took off, shoot it down.

The cardinal factor is that they knew that this was not an American-flag airplane. If had been an American-flag airplane, such as Pan Am, or, for that matter, even an RC-135, they wouldn't have shot it down. They would have escorted it out and had screamed to high heaven thereafter.

SPIVAK: Well, there were at least two of our flag carriers who fly that same route. Pam Am does and I think Northwest Orient does. And does Air Canada fly that?

GENERAL ROMER: No. No, they don't. But they flew me in their simulator over this route.

SPIVAK: Who, Air Canada flew you?

GENERAL ROMER: Yes.

SPIVAK: Oh, you took the route yourself just to see?

GENERAL ROMER: In their simulator. As you know, the

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747 simulators and the other simulators are superb flying machines. Even though they're tied to the ground, you do everything in them. And they flew me on the route from Anchorage to Seoul, both on the Air 20 route and the other one.

SPIVAK: All right.

We're visiting here with retired Major General Richard Romer. Incidentally, I was derelict -- this isn't the first time, General -- but I was derelict in not telling you that General Romer's findings are contained in a book which is published by a publisher I never heard of before.

Is this a Canadian publisher?

GENERAL ROMER: A Canadian publisher, distributing in the United States.

SPIVAK: Okay. It's called Massacre: 747, written by retired Major General Richard Romer of the Canadian Air Force. And we'll continue here with General Romer in just a moment.

And incidentally, you know, you know how these talk radio programs work, General. If there are people listening now who are still naysayers and think that we somehow provoked the Russians into shooting that plane down, why don't you have at it with General Romer here? You know, I'm tired of people coming after me on this issue. If you really honestly and truly believe that we set this thing up, go ahead and tell General Romer why you think so and see what he says.

* * *

SPIVAK: We're visiting with retired Major General Richard Romer of the Canadian Air Force. General Romer has written other books, but this one is called Massacre: 747. And I guess, like everybody else, General Romer was dumbfounded when he first heard about this.

Now look, General, even now, thinking about this, it's just hard for me to imagine that the Russians are venal enough to shoot down an unarmed commercial airliner. I mean what in the world could possibly have motivated them to do this?

GENERAL ROMER: Well, first of all, I'll put on my lawyer's hat because I'm an attorney.

SPIVAK: Oh, I forgot about that.

GENERAL ROMER: Well, just to bring you up to speed, as they say in the Air Force. You have to look at the evidence.

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The fact is, they did shoot it down. They shot it down knowing what it was.

You have to look at the mind-set of the Soviet Union. And the mind-set of the people of the Soviet Union -- I'll put it on a corporate basis -- is quite different than ours in the United States and in my country. They have been inculcated for decades now with propaganda from their own controlled press that the United States, the American eagle is going to attack them at any time. They've been inculcated with the concept that they must defend the motherland at all costs.

And in addition to that -- and they believe this. This is a mind-set that we don't understand, but they believe this. And this, of course, is taken all the way back to Stalingrad and the great sacrifices that were made there by the Soviet people, three million-plus destroyed in World War II. And this is what is kept alive in the Soviet consciousness by their rulers. And so it's a defense-of-the-motherland situation.

The next item, of course, is that this is an enormously sensitive area for the Soviets. They have their Pacific fleet based at Petropavlovsk on the Kamchatka Peninsular, over which this aircraft flew on this particular night. And they have a place where they're going to and they are installing 150 new intercontinental ballistic missiles, the new P breed of those in that same area.

SPIVAK: And don't they have some sort of a big secret radar installation out there too at Sakhalin?

GENERAL ROMER: Yes. Well, when you get down to Sakhalin, yes, they have. They have all manner of equipment and installations and infrastructure. They're all designed for the intercontinental aspect. They've got submarines in the Sea of Okhotsk, which lies between Kamchatka Peninsular and Sakhalin, where Sakhalin is located, which have submarine-launched ballistic missiles targeted on the United States. It's a very sensitive area.

But in addition to that, from the legal point of view, there was a law passed by the Politburo, the Soviet government, in '82 after Andropov took power which requires the air defense force of the Soviet Union to use weapons against any aircraft which intrudes their airspace which will not respond to signals and which is not doing what they require. So that that overrides any international protcols which the Soviets might have signed.

Now, they are dedicated to a bloody-minded approach to the defense of their territory. This is what this incident demonstrates quite clearly. They're totally ruthless. And they used this particular incident, in my opinion, to demonstrate to

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the Western World that to toy with the Russian bear in its own lair is something that they will simply not tolerate. And this was a very good way of demonstrating that they will not tolerate such an action. And they have said on many occasions since September the 1st last year, after this incident, that they would do it again. And I believe it. I think we all should believe it.

And, of course, the counterpropaganda exercise that they went through in trying to put the blame over on the United States Government, which was largely successful, although it was totally false, is one of the best games that they play. They are masters at this business of propaganda and counterpropaganda.

So, here we are almost a year later, and I'm telling you they weill do it again. And we've got to understand that they are bloody-minded about their own country, and they'll take the consequences of any kind of act. But they would not shoot down an American aircraft under these circumstances.

SPIVAK: Or a Canadian one either, I would think.

GENERAL ROMER: Oh, I don't know. Canada may be in the same size scale and the same weight scale that they would apply to South Korea. I don't know, and I hope I never find out.

SPIVAK: I hope you never do, either.

Don't they overfly your airspace every now and then?

GENERAL ROMER: Oh, sure, they intrude our airspace. We're part of NORAD, the North American Aerospace Defense System, and they intrude with their Bear reconnaissance airplanes, and we rush ours up to intercept them, and then we play games with them and wave at them, and off they go.

SPIVAK: You know, just excuse me. I don't mean to belabor this point, but I keep hearing -- some guy I met a couple of years ago was telling me stories -- it has nothing to do with airplanes, but this guy was serving on a submarine. And he was saying, you know, out at sea the Russians and our people play these chicken games under the water with these nuclear submarines. I guess it happens in the air too.

GENERAL ROMER: Oh, sure. It's the chicken game. And also the game of intruding into the other side's airspace to get them all dashing to get in their airplanes and getting into the air to intercept.

And the Russians complained about this after this event. They claimed that the RC-135s out of Shemia, the ones ahead of

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this, had been sending up all kinds of people to intrude, get the alarm bells going; and then when the aircraft came up to intercept them, they'd leave Soviet airspace and sort of wave goodbye.

SPIVAK: All right. We're visiting with retired Major General Richard Romer of the Canadian Air Force, who has done some work here and written a little book. It's a paperback book called Massacre: 747, which has to do with his analysis of what happened out there when the Russians shot down that Korean airliner, 269 people on board, all of them dead.

* * *

SPIVAK: Our guest is retired Major General Richard Romer of the Canadian Air Force, a former combat fighter pilot in World War II, also a lawyer, he told me. And General Romer, like everybody else, was pretty upset about what the Russians did. So he went and did some work on this and wrote a book called Massacre: 747, in which he tells you what he thinks happened up there.

By the way, General, before we take a phone call here, did you make any attempt to communicate directly with the Russians before this book came out?

GENERAL ROMER: Oh, yes. I went through our own intelligence people and started out with whom I should speak at the Russian Embassy in Ottawa, made contact with that person and put in a bid to go to the Soviet Union and Sakhalin Island to talk to the pilot and any other person I could lay hands on. I have not yet had a nyet. I know that the communication went across to Moscow. But at the same time, I have had no positive response. And if I do go, that will probably mean another book, because it will be very interesting to do.

I was interested in the aircraft being forced down in Yemen because it has the same sort of ring to the incident because it -- remember the 747 incident started with a report that the Russians had brought the airplane down, forced it down on Sakhalin Island. Here we have an incident where an aircraft was reported to be down in Yemen. There are two Yemens. One is South Yemen, which I expect this is where the aircraft was brought down. It's near the mouth of the Strait -- it's near the Strait of Hormuz, which is just outside the Persian Gulf, which is a highly sensitive area. But South Yemen, of course, is oriented to the Soviet Union. And it will be very interesting to see what develops from that particular incident.

SPIVAK: I read the story this morning. It was in the paper. The way it was described, the Yemeni controllers ordered

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the plane to take a route which took it right over their airspace, and then they forced it down.

GENERAL ROMER: That's a very interesting way to approach things. But that's a story that, apparently so far, is going to have a pleasant result, if what we're reading and hearing is correct.

SPIVAK: Well, they're out of there now. They blew a tire on the runway, I read this morning, but they let them go.

We're going to take some phone calls, I promise you. And if you've got a question you want to ask General Romer about what happened out there when the Russians shot that plane, the Korean plane down and killed all those people, or if you're one of these people that really honestly and truly believe that it was a setup, that CIA put that plane in there to take pictures -- you know, General, there are people who believe it. You know there are. And the most common story that I hear is that they had a camera in the nose of the 747, or in the baggage compartment, or something like that, which was taking pictures at high altitude of that secret radar installation there in Sakhalin, or whatever it was.

That's theoretically possible, is it not?

GENERAL ROMER: Oh, surely. It's always theoretically possible to stick a camera in the belly of any airplane. That's easy. But when you look at the situation, the United States, if it wanted to gather information of this kind, has all of the publicly known methods of doing this through its satellites and other means without utilizing some South Korean airplane for this purpose. The United States has all manner of opportunities to get the same information without using a Korean 747.

SPIVAK: Well, our intelligence is so good, evidently, that the National Security Agency was monitoring the Russian transmissions and they knew when the Russians scrambled their airplanes. I mean we were watching that thing happen.

Which brings up another question, General. Excuse me. Because there are some people still wondering, if we knew what was going on, why didn't we do something about it?

GENERAL ROMER: Well, I find in my search of the information that, sure, there was an RC-135 on station. There always is off Kamchatka. But in terms of monitoring and listening to, with live ears and bodies, what was going on on this frequency, there's no indication at this time that the United States had any kind of intelligence, electronic intelligence equipment doing that; that this airplane, once it got to the

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position it was over Soviet airspace, was not within the ambit of any kind of warning system or detection system that the United States had in place.

Sure, you can speculate that this was the case. But as far as I could determine, it was well beyond any kind of surveillance that the United States could mount.

SPIVAK: Well, there's some dispute about that.

GENERAL ROMER: Of course.

SPIVAK: To be fair about it. Because at the time, I remember, we had a fellow who wrote the first definitive work about what goes on at NSA out here in Maryland -- that's about the most supersecret agency in this country -- and he certainly led us to believe that they were looking right over the Russians' shoulders, that they were monitoring the transmissions, that they knew when they scrambled their pilots, and everything else.

And if that were true, then, you know, the question came up: Okay. If they knew that the Russians were on their way up there, why didn't they try to get in touch with that pilot?

GENERAL ROMER: The Kamchatka Peninsular, there would be a monitoring opportunity via the RC-135. But if he told you that, he also should have told you that the people who are on board the RC-135s are there to keep the equipment going, and the equipment monitors and records; that the exercise is not to have people speaking Russian on the aircraft trying to interpret what is going on. This is done subsequently in the intelligence-gathering system.

I'm sorry, I just do not believe...

SPIVAK: You're not buying it.

GENERAL ROMER: I'm not buying that at all.

SPIVAK: Bullroar.

GENERAL ROMER: Bullroar is garbage. That is garbage.

SPIVAK: General Romer's favorite word, I think, bullroar.

GENERAL ROMER: Sometimes it is. Garbage. Garbage is another good word.

SPIVAK: Okay. Garbage is fine. Frankly, I like bullroar better than garbage.

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GENERAL ROMER: Oh, that's fine. It might suit you.

SPIVAK: Yeah, it does. It does. You've listened to this program, I see.

Major General Richard Romer, retired from the Canadian Air Force, is visiting with us this morning. And now, in just a moment, we're going to take some phone calls at 966-TALK. And if you want to ask General Romer a question about what he thinks happened up there, or if you're one of these people who really believes that we set the whole thing up, why don't you run it by General Romer and see what he says?

* * *

SPIVAK: You're on WRC.

MAN: Finally, Mr. Spivak, you've got someone on there who kind of shares my views on some things about the Russians.

I want to run something else by the General there.

SPIVAK: Yeah, go ahead. Run it by.

MAN: Not from that one point of view that you were talking about; from the other end, sort of.

There is a school of thought, as you like to put it, that thinks that there was a conspiracy to shoot down that plane pur -- well, not purposely. But there was, do you remember, a representative, a U.S. representative, the late Larry McDonald of Georgia, who was on that plane, and one of the few conservatives in the Congress.

SPIVAK: Okay. We know who Larry McDonald was. Do you want to know whether General Romer thinks that the Russians were on the lookout for Larry McDonald?

MAN: Yeah. Also, by coincidence, former President Richard Nixon was supposed to be on that same plane, but changed his mind at the last minute.

SPIVAK: All right. Let me get a comment on that from General Romer.

You know about Larry...

GENERAL ROMER: Well, I'm going to qualify it in the word you like. That's a bullroar conspiracy theory.

First of all, there was a rumor that former President

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had been booked on the airplane and the CIA had tipped him off. Rumor only. The former President, to the best of his ability, has denied that this was true. And for once, I accept -- I would accept what he's saying.

SPIVAK: [Laughter]

GENERAL ROMER: The other aspect is that Dr. McDonald, the President of the right-wing Birch Society, was indeed on that airplane. But it's doubtful that the Russians even had a clue that he was on that one. He was supposed to be on one going out on the Sunday night before and missed it because of bad weather connections, missed another one, according to my information, and finally got on this one. And even though the KGB has tentacles -- and I have to be careful of that word -- everywhere, I doubt very much whether they had a handle on the fact that the was on the airplane.

On top of that, it is very hard to believe that the Soviets had assigned that importance to one individual in the United States, no matter what his apparent notoriety, as far as they were concerned, or his anti-communist stance, which was very strong, that they would give him the opportunity to die in the cause of democracy in this kind of form. In other words, I really can't believe that this is what motivated the Soviets.

I think what motivated them was what I have already said, and that was that they considered this an opportunity to teach the Koreans a lesson once and for all and to demonstrate to the Western World that they're tough people.

SPIVAK: You're on WRC with General Romer.

MAN: Got two questions here. One relates to the motivation of these 15 Korean Airline pilots who occasionally overflew Russian territory, even though their employers did not want them to. The reason I bring this up is that it has been alleged that although the flight 007 may not have been engaged in spying, somebody may have paid the captain to overfly Russian territory so as to stimulate their defenses, so that our aircraft and other facilities could make observations.

SPIVAK: All right. Good. I'm glad you brought that up.

What do you think about that, General?

GENERAL ROMER: It goes this way. You have to look at payment to pilots. Korean Air Lines in 1980-81 lost $47.8 million in their operations in those two years. Now, I have the annual reports for the period and I analyzed very carefully what

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chairman of the company was saying in terms of policy. And what he did was to cut costs everywhere he possibly could. That was prudent business practice. And, of course, when you're running an airline, the first place you look is your air operation. That's where it costs you money. And there is all manner of evidence that Korean Airline pilots, even in this country, were jumping the line, among other things -- in other words, to cut costs, when they're coming into Kennedy or wherever, they would from time to time say that they were 20 miles out, but just beyond radar coverage, when in fact they might be 100 miles out. In other words, to get a location, a number in the lineup, a priority that would allow them to come straight in. This kind of thing.

Now, there's nothing wrong with a policy whereby an airline will encourage its pilots to save flying time. It's very valuable. And to give them bonuses per minute if they will save and can save flying time, as a matter of practice. And I think that what we're talking about here is the matter of the Korean pilots, on any route in the world, attempting to cut their flying time by cutting corners.

SPIVAK: Wait a minute, General. To be absolutely fair -- far be it for me to get into a squabble with a retired major general. But what George wants to know is, did somebody slip the pilot a few bucks to stray off course on purpose in order to provoke the Russians into scrambling their fighter planes, or some other defensive maneuver, in order to take a look and see how they did it?

GENERAL ROMER: No. In my opinion, the aircraft -- the pilot knew where he was, but he was not there for the purpose of getting anybody scrambled. He was, in my opinion -- and it's only a judgment. He was there because he was cutting a corner across the Kamchatka Peninsular. He was on the Great Circle route. if you take a string and a globe and run the string on the globe from Anchorage to Seoul, that's the Great Circle route. And you will find that the aircraft was directly on that route at the time it was shot down.

What I am in effect saying is that there is every evidence that this shortcutting to save fuel -- he would save 20 minutes flying time -- had been going on. Other pilots had done it. And I think that we will ultimately find that this is the reason that Korean Air Lines, in their investigation after this event, grounded 14 of their senior pilots. Because they went back and discovered that this had been going on.

SPIVAK: What's your other question?

MAN: Well, my other question had to do with the

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notably in the New York Times, that the preponderance of U.S. intelligence opinion held that the Koreans did know what they were shooting -- I mean the Russians did not know what they were shooting at. I've always believed that they did know. And I find it surprising if the preponderance of U.S. intelligence opinion holds that the Russians did not know what they were shooting at.

Do you have any comment on that, General?

SPIVAK: We talked about that before. But go ahead.

GENERAL ROMER: Well, the preponderance of U.S. intelligence. I can only do what my own preponderance of where I think it went. I am convinced that the Soviet Union knew, the Soviet commanders knew that this was a Korean aircraft. They had tracked it all the way through. They knew it was not an American aircraft. They decided that they were going to shoot it down. The pilot could see it, the Soviet pilot. And I am of the opinion that the Soviets -- there was no question at all, regardless of what the intelligence community thinks.

SPIVAK: That's your answer.

One more thing. Have you noticed or been able to -- I don't know. You're one human being. But have you noticed anywhere in any official Soviet source there is the slightest bit of contrition about what they did?

GENERAL ROMER: Well, absolutely not.

SPIVAK: None.

GENERAL ROMER: There's been a total refusal to be contrite or to be apologetic or in any way acknowledge the enormity of the act that they perpetrated. What they have simply continued is to attempt to shift and keep shifted the blame for this incident onto the American government. And even now, stories that are coming, for example, out of the United Kingdom -- and the American press believe anything that comes out of the U.K. because it's British, you see. And the most recent one was a report in a defense journal in the United Kingdom written by somebody by the name of P.Q. Mann, which is an anonymous name which is not his. He refuses to disclose his identity.

SPIVAK: His nom de plume.

GENERAL ROMER: Nom de plume. And he alleges, of course, and quotes Russian sources with great credibility, and claims that the United States Government was involved because the shuttle was involved in this thing, the American shuttle went up

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36 hours in advance. The shuttle, at the time this occurred, was 2000 miles away and over the horizon. He claims there was a time that the American ferret satellite and the RC-135 -- pure ongoing KGB disinformation. But the American press picked this up and believe it and feed it out to the people, and this whole thing is perpetrated -- perpetuated. And the KGB and the Russians just continue to do their masterful propaganda job.

SPIVAK: All right.

Well, if you're still interested in this subject, and I would suppose that people are, you can read General Romer's conclusionsin this book which is being sold in this country now. It's published in Canada. It's called Massacre: 747, written by retired Major General Richard Romer.

And, General, it's nice to see you.

GENERAL ROMER: Nice to be here.

SPIVAK: You know, I'm so happy you came in to debunk the bullroar here this morning, because we've had a fair amount of that. Thank you for coming.

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