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Memo

SERIAL No.

T128/83

Dear Margaret:

Subject: Disaster / Korean 9/83

The barbaric act by the Soviet Union in shooting down the civilian plane of Korean Airlines and killing 269 innocent people has aroused a worldwide storm of indignation. I am pleased that your government's statements demonstrate that you share my sense of outrage at this utterly indefensible act.

On behalf of the American people, let me express to the British people our sorrow and condolence over the loss of life in this tragic event. I note that residents of Hong Kong also perished. I am shocked and deeply saddened by this dastardly action and I know that this feeling is shared by all my countrymen. Our hearts and prayers go out to the families, friends and loved ones of those who have perished. It is a tragedy for them and for the world that innocent life should be so needlessly and cruelly taken. It should also remind us of the continuing need for cooperation and support among friends in the free world.

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The question which faces us now is how, as national leaders and members of the international community, we should respond to this act against the safety of international civil aviation which directly affects all of us.

In my address to the American people, I reported on the conclusions which I had reached as a result of consultations with my key advisers and members of Congress. I made clear that while the United States would take certain measures unilaterally, such as my decision to suspend any extension of our bilateral agreement with the Soviet Union for cooperation in the field of transportation and the continuation of our suspension of Aeroflot flights to the United States, our response would be developed with other concerned countries. I also stressed that this issue was not one between the United States and the Soviet Union but one which involved the relations between the international community, as a whole, and the USSR.

In the period since we learned of this awful tragedy, we have been in close consultation with your government, both here and in London. In these private consultations, we have proposed that our friends and allies join in a suspension of Aeroflot service to their countries for an initial period, perhaps 60-90 days, until the Soviet Union

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suspend the so-called "interline" arrangements between our airlines and Aeroflot. I also believe it is essential that we continue to seek Soviet recognition of its responsibility for this egregious act and agreement to make appropriate compensation for the lives and property lost as a result of the Soviet action. A full accounting by the Soviet Union of the events which led up to the tragedy is also essential as well as their cooperation in facilitating the search efforts. Finally, as far as our governments are concerned, we should enhance our common efforts in the UN Security Council and other international organizations, particularly ICAO, both to ensure future flight safety and effectively respond to this brutal Soviet act.

There is one other area of activity underway in our countries which is of considerable importance, namely the private efforts to suspend civil aviation between the Soviet Union and the rest of the world, undertaken by groups such as airline pilots and trade unions representing workers who service aircraft in our countries. To the extent consistent with our laws and policies, I believe such popular manifestations of indignation over the Soviet act should be encouraged.

You will have noted that the Canadian Government has announced that it was suspending Aeroflot flights to Montreal for a period of 60 days and was taking other steps restricting Aeroflot's activities in Canada. We are gratified by this resolute action by the Government of Canada, and I hope that your government will be prepared to adopt analogous measures. As far as the United States is concerned, I am also asking our appropriate authorities to suspend the interline ticketing arrangements between U.S. airline companies and Aeroflot and to close the small Aeroflot office in the U.S.

The Soviet action represents a challenge to the international community. It would be a tragedy if we do not collectively respond in a resolute and clear manner to this action. At the same time, as I stressed in my speech, it is essential that we continue our efforts in the INF negotiations and START talks, and other fora to reach balanced and verifiable agreements with the Soviet Union which reduce the threat of war and contribute to enhanced international security. We will continue to work with you and other allied nations towards these objectives.

Sincerely,

/s/

Ron

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