

Editorial

What the world said

The first response around the world to the Sept. 1 Soviet attack on an unarmed Korean commercial aircraft was, as President Reagan put it, "anger, disbelief, and profound sadness." Among the most important statements in the immediate aftermath was Mr. Reagan's on Sept. 2: "...While events in Afghanistan and elsewhere have left few illusions about the willingness of the Soviet Union to advance its interests through violence and intimidation, all of us had hoped that certain irreducible standards of civilized behavior nonetheless obtained.

"But this event shocks the sensibilities of people everywhere. A tradition in the civilized world has always been to offer help to mariners and pilots who are lost or in distress on the sea or in the air.

"Where human life is valued, extraordinary efforts are extended to preserve and protect it. And it's essential that as civilized societies we ask searching questions about the nature of regimes where such standards do not apply.

"Beyond these emotions, the world notes the stark contrast that exists between Soviet words and deeds.

"What can we think of a regime that so broadly trumpets its vision of peace and global disarmament and yet so callously and quickly commits a terrorist act to sacrifice the lives of innocent human beings?

"What can be said about Soviet credibility, when they so flagrantly lie about such a heinous act? . . ."

Senator Henry Jackson, Democrat of Washington, held a press conference in Seattle on Sept. 1, just before he suffered a fatal heart attack. Senator Jackson, a leader of the Democratic Party grouping opposed to "arms control" at the expense of the United States, declared:

"The murder of 269 human beings is a barbaric act. There was no clear and present danger to the Soviet Union. Surely they knew it was a non-combat plane. Surely they should have known other ways to get the plane out of Soviet airspace.

"This brings home the difference between Eastern and Western values. In the Western world, we prize human life. . . . You have to read Russian history. They don't give a damn about public opinion. It goes back centuries. . . . They wouldn't send a submarine

into Stockholm or intervene in the German elections if they were concerned with public opinion. . . .

"They have insulted the international community by taking a barbaric course inconsistent with human life. I hope the international community will respond vigorously so that an act of this kind will never happen again. . . . We are not going to start a war. The strongest response is the moral one, a response of outrage, a response that contrasts the West's first priority on human life. . . . The United Nations doesn't have the credibility. The advanced sector, the underdeveloped sector must take the lead. The Third World should come out and make it clear that this conduct is inconsistent with their views of humanity."

In Western Europe, Italian Defense Minister Spadolini affirmed the need to respond with a defense capability sufficient to discourage aggression. Herr Ekhard Voigt, chairman of the Defense Policy Working Group of Franz-Josef Strauss's Christian Social Union political party, a deputy in the West German federal parliament, and a member of its defense policy committee, elaborated in a statement to *EIR* on what that might mean:

"I think that this act of the Soviet Union in shooting down the South Korean airliner was by no means accidental; rather it must be seen as part of total Soviet strategy, politically, militarily, as well as in respect to all aspects of disarmament discussions. As a deputy of a free parliament of the West, I say that this Soviet act was an act of planned, premeditated murder.

"This ought to open the eyes of many among us free citizens of the West to the fact that any policy of appeasement is doomed to failure. We in the West must at this time stand together and follow the leadership of the United States, politically, but also with respect to technologies, by which I mean in particular the U.S. policy of developing beam weapons for defense against nuclear missiles, which the President of the United States has urged us in Europe to consider in the interest of our own defense. At this time, we in Europe must support the beam weapons policy of the United States of America."