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ICAO COUNCIL EXAMINES FOLLOW-UP OF KOREAN AIR LINES INCIDENT

Montreal, October 1983 -- A team of five International Civil Aviation Organization experts, assembled immediately after the adoption of a Resolution by the Extraordinary Session of the Council (15-16 September) on the Korean Air Lines Flight 007 incident of 1 September, is now collecting facts and assimilating data concerning the flight and destruction of the aircraft.

Reporting on an interim basis, pending completion of the investigation in December, the Secretary General of the Organization, Yves Lambert, informed Council members (on 20 October) that he had been in contact with Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States, soliciting their co-operation.

Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United States have provided relevant information and accepted a visit by the investigating team during its field travel. The Soviet Union has indicated it is conducting its own investigation and would transmit the results to ICAO in accordance with international law. The Secretary General told the Council that he had also received and accepted an invitation to visit the Soviet Union in the near future.

The ICAO team between 26 September and 3 October visited New York, Anchorage, the Republic of Korea and Japan, flew Korean Air Lines Flight 007, and met personnel concerned with airline operations, air traffic control and other services involved in flight planning and operations. In the sea of Japan, ICAO team members were invited by the United States and Japanese Governments on board search and rescue vessels.

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At the request of the United States Government, an ICAO team member is presently on board of a United States naval recovery vessel to observe the possible retrieval of the flight data and/or cockpit voice recorders from KAL 007.

The Secretary General told the Council he made formal arrangements with the French Government for the observation of retrieval, transport and extraction of data from the "black boxes", in the event they are ultimately retrieved. Extraction and reproduction of data will take place in French Administration laboratories at ICAO's request and under ICAO's control, with observers of States directly involved being invited to be present during the entire process.

The Secretary General reported to Council that the ICAO investigation had revealed no negative implications whatsoever with regard to the safety of continuing, regular air transport operations on the North Pacific air route system. It was noted that while flight operations on the northernmost of the air routes (R-20), which was used by the ill-fated KAL 007, had been temporarily suspended after the incident, it was now back in full operation. This much-used, international westbound air route has been in use for nearly a decade by an estimated 100,000 or more civilian commercial flights.

The investigating team has been at the ICAO Regional Office, Bangkok, Thailand, since 10 October. While there, it began analysing the voluminous data it had assembled during its field travels and assimilating it with the pre-travel information it had gathered. A complete report is due to be presented to the Council by the Secretary General before the end of the current session of the Council, 16 December.