



CN-235s roll out

Two CN-235s made simultaneous public debuts on September 17, one at Casa's Getafe factory in Spain, the other some 7,000 miles away at Nurtanio's Bandung, Indonesia, base.

The companies foresee an international market of 1,800 civil variants and 600 military variants into 1995. An additional 350 are likely to be required by Indonesia itself as a primary means of transport among its 6,000 inhabited islands. This portion of the home market alone will exceed the predicted break-even number of 350 units. One hundred and six orders and 23 options have been taken to date.

Was 747 positively identified?

The United States' transcript of Soviet radio transmissions leading up to the shooting down of a Korean Air Lines Boeing 747 does not reveal whether the aircraft had been positively identified by Soviet air defences.

The airliner was shot down at 1824 GMT. The transcript segment released by the US State Department begins some 25 minutes earlier. Throughout the period covered, the 747 is referred to as "the target".

The 747 was, according to the Soviet Union, initially intercepted over the Kamchatka Peninsula at 1730. It seems unlikely that the 747 was not positively identified at this stage, leaving later pilots, including the one who shot down the 747 with 269 people on board, in no doubt as to the intruder's identity.

Significantly the US State Department refuses to release transcripts of earlier conversations. These could possibly include air-to-ground exchanges which could either positively identify the aircraft as a 747 or, as the Soviets claim, a US Air Force RC-135 electronic-intelligence gathering aircraft.

The segment of communication released involves four aircraft and three ground control stations. Only air-to-ground transmissions were

intercepted by the listening post on Hokkaido, making it difficult to ascertain what instructions were given to pilots involved in the interception.

Aircraft 805 is claimed to be a Sukhoi Su-15, armed with two AA-3 Anab radar-guided air-to-air missiles. 805 reports to a ground control station codenamed Deputat. Aircraft 163 appears to be a MiG-23. This aircraft initially reports to a ground station codenamed Karnaval, suggesting that 163 operates from a different base to 805. Two other aircraft, 121 and 731, play a minor part in the drama, as does a ground station codenamed Trikotazh.

The transcript begins as aircraft 805 sights the 747, flying on course 240°.

18:05:56 I see it

18:06:00 Roger, understood I'm flying behind

According to the Soviet Union the 747 was heading directly for the fighter base and major missile site near Yuzhno Sakhalinsk at the southern tip of Sakhalin Island. 805 then appears to ask on to which course he should turn the 747.

18:07:50 Roger. Repeat the course... To the left probably. Not to the right. Carry out course 260. (On course 260)

Understood. Roger. Should I turn off the weapons

system?... Roger

A few seconds later:

18:09:00 Yes, it has turned... The target is 80° to my left

805 then changes course, first to 240°, then to 220°.

He then reports:

18:10:51 Roger, (the target's strobe) light is blinking

18:12:10 I see it visually and on radar

18:13:05 I see it, I'm locked on to the target

805's next remark suggests that the reason for locking on the radar was to interrogate the 747's transponder:

18:13:26 The target isn't responding to IFF

Interrogation must have occurred earlier in the interception, with the same result, as Soviet and Western equipment is incompatible.

805 remains locked on to the 747 for several minutes, reporting:

18:18:34 The ANO (air navigational lights) are burning. The strobe light is flashing

He then begins an attack.

18:19:02 I am closing on the target

18:19:08 He doesn't see me (The original American transcript read "I have enough time" but was subsequently modified)

18:20:08 Fiddlesticks. I'm going. That is, my ZG is lit (missile seeker lock on indicator)

For some reason 805 breaks off his attack:

18:20:30 I'm turning lock on off and I'm approaching the target

At 1820, the Soviets claim, the interceptor fired four bursts of tracer along the airliner's flightpath, a total of 120 rounds. There is no mention of this in the original US transcript. The USA has subsequently revised its transcript after deciphering a "previously unintelligible" scrap of transmission:

18:20:49 I am firing cannon bursts

18:21:24 Yes, I'm approaching the target. I'm going in closer

18:21:35 The target's (strobe) light is blinking. I have approached the target to a distance of about 2(km)

18:21:55 Well, I'm not making any reactions

18:22:02 The target is decreasing speed

18:22:17 I am going ahead of it. I'm a good shooter. I'm going to hit the target

18:22:23 I have increased speed

18:22:29 No. It is decreasing speed

18:22:42 It should have been earlier. How can I chase it already abeam to the target

18:22:55 Now I have to back a bit from the target

18:23:18 From me it is

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