

"Deliberate False Radio Beacon" Caused Machel Plane Crash

(a) Tass in Russian for abroad 0320 gmt 28 (and in English 1550 gmt 27) Jan 87

Text of report of press briefing:

Facts show that the disaster of the Tu-134 airliner with President Samora Machel of Mozambique on board was the result of the deliberate operation of a powerful false radio beacon situated outside Maputo airport. This was said by Ivan Vasin, USSR Deputy Minister of Civil Aviation. He was addressing a briefing for Soviet and foreign journalists here today, [Moscow 27th January]. Guided by a false beacon, the plane veered off course and flew into a highland area on South African territory, I. Vasin said.

The deputy minister said that even a perfunctory familiarisation with reports in the Western press about the accident shows that reactionary anti-Soviet circles, using these events for provocative purposes, were trying to whip up another wave of anti-Soviet hysteria and distract world public from analysing the actual circumstances of the crash of the Mozambican plane.

A new campaign of disinformation in the Western press had been prompted by the so-called "hearings" in court organised by the Botha regime to investigate the accident. They opened in the RSA on 20th January. The activity of that court contradicts norms set by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), I. Vasin said.

He said the analysis of actions of the crew shows that throughout the flight they were functioning, were fully in control of the flight, were in contact with the traffic controller on the flight's route and reacted adequately to navigation information received on board the plane.

I. Vasin said the existence of the false beacon in the area of the plane's crash is also confirmed by the fact that a Boeing-737-200 aircraft owned by the Mozambican airlines LAM which was on a flight from Maputo to Beira 50 minutes after the Tu-134 plane also veered off course. Besides that, the tripartite commission discovered traces of a removed army-type camp in the accident's area in the RSA. The camp was abandoned the day after the crash.

(b) Soviet television 1943 gmt 22 Jan 87

Text of "The World Today" commentary presented by Vitaliy Ilyashenko:

An international commission in the RSA is continuing its investigation into the causes of the air disaster in which President Samora Machel of Mozambique died last October. The necessary materials, the recordings made by the on-board recorders during the flight and even a mock-up of the instrument panel in the aircraft's cabin were submitted to the members of the commission. [Video: part of instrument panel being examined on the ground; general shot of crash scene; mock-up of plane's instruments, marked in Russian].

Expert testimony showed that there were no technical malfunctions in the aircraft. It is well-known that the authorities in Pretoria deny any RSA involvement in the disaster. [Video: journalists inspecting exhibits]. However, the allegations that the air crew were deliberately misled by a false radio transmitter operating on the Maputo airport wavelength have not been disproved. [Video: aerial shot of crash scene, plane's wheels on the ground and coffin beside wreckage]. As a matter of fact, the RSA possesses modern electronic equipment for transmitting powerful signals and causing interference with the proper functioning of a plane's navigation systems. [Video: members of the commission bowing and taking their seats]. The results of the investigation will be known in a few days' time.