The President has seen_____

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PRESIDENTIAL RADIO TALK: KOREAN AIRLINER & LABOR DAY
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1983

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My fellow Americans:

This weekend marks the 89th observance of Labor Day, a special day for all Americans. Before I get to that topic, however, I must speak to you briefly about the recent act of brutality that continues to horrify us all: I'm referring to the outrageous Soviet attack against 269 people aboard the unarmed Korean passenger plane.

This murder of innocent civilians is a serious international issue between the Soviet Union and civilized people everywhere, who cherish individual rights and value human life. It is up to all of us -- leaders and citizens of the world -- to deal with the Soviets in a calm, controlled, but absolutely firm manner.

We have joined in the call for an urgent U.N. Security Council meeting. The evidence is clear; it leaves no doubt; it is time for the Soviets to account. The Soviet Union owes the world the fullest possible explanation and apology for their inexcusable act of brutality. So far, they have flunked the test. Even now, they continue to distort and deny the truth. People everywhere can draw only one conclusion from their violent behavior: there is a glaring gap between Soviet words and deeds. They speak endlessly about their love of brotherhood, disarmament and peace, but they reserve the right to disregard aviation safety and to sacrifice human lives.

Make no mistake on this last point. This is not the first time the Soviets have shot at and hit a civilian airliner when it flew over Soviet territory. Our Government does not shoot down foreign aircraft over U.S. territory, even though commercial aircraft from the Soviet Union and Cuba have over flown sensitive U.S. military facilities.

We and other civilized countries follow procedures to prevent a tragedy, rather than to provoke one. But while the Soviets accuse others of wanting to return to the Cold War, it is they who have never left it behind.

I met with the National Security Council last night. Tomorrow, I will meet with Congressional leaders of both parties to discuss this issue, as well as the situation in Lebanon, on which the National Security Council met today. We are determined to move forward and to act in concert, both with the Congress and other members of the international community. We must make sure that the fundamental rules of safety of travel are respected by all nations -- even the Soviet Union.

Now let me turn to another subject that is also very much on our minds this weekend: Labor Day. More than any other country in the world, ours was built, not by some small, privileged elite, but by the physical, mental and moral strength of free working men and women -- people who asked for nothing but the chance to build a better future in a climate of fairness and freedom. As one of the founding fathers of the American labor movement, Samuel Gompers, put it, our society is based on the right of working people "to be full sharers in the abundance

which is the result of their brain and brawn, and the civilization of which they are the founders and the mainstay . . ."

Those words have mean a lot to me over the years. I've always believed that America can only be true to itself when its promise is shared by all our people.

One of the best ways to make sure that happens is to build a healthy, growing economy that opens up more and more opportunity to our people. We've been working at that for more than 2-1/2 years now. With you help and the help of a bipartisan group in the Congress, our efforts are showing good results.

Just this week, Commerce Secretary Baldrige announced that in July inventories registered their biggest advance in 20 months. That means the economic recovery has boosted the confidence of manufacturers and encouraged business firms to restock. It adds up to more work for people in a wide range of industries and trades. ~~It also~~ means ~~that~~ this recovery will continue to be strong.

Meanwhile, the civilian unemployment rate has dropped by 1.3 percentage points since last December. The number of unemployed has declined by more than 1.3 million. And, a healthy, growing economy has added almost 2.5 million people to the Nation's payrolls.

Another good way of testing progress is to measure how well the average American family is doing today. ~~Here there are some very revealing numbers that tell us more than all of the high-flown political rhetoric and commentary.~~

~~First, there's the progress against inflation. Thanks to the gains we've been able to make since coming to office,~~ An American family earning $25,000 has $600 more today in purchasing power than it would if inflation were still raging at its 1980 rate.

And then there are your tax savings. ~~As you know, we had to work long and hard to get your tax cuts through the Congress, and to protect them afterwards. It hasn't been easy, but we've done it, and these lower tax rates mean that~~ The typical American family will pay $700 less in Federal income taxes than if the old 1980 rates were still in effect.

Now, I know that for many Americans on this Labor Day, life is still tough. None of us can be fully satisfied until many more of our people find work. And we won't be satisfied until we cut inflation all the way back to zero. But every week our economy is gaining fresh strength, and that's good news for us all.

Finally, let me say that on this weekend, I hope you will take a moment to celebrate not only the working people of this Nation but something that makes it all possible: our freedom. As I mentioned at the outset, we have watched with horror these past few days as totalitarianism has shown its ghastly face once again. That's why here in America, we must remain a bastion of free men and women -- working together toward a brighter future.

'Till next week, thanks for listening and God bless you.