



In Wake of Tucson, Media Ignores Rep. Larry McDonald

In the midst of one American tragedy, another one is being ignored. Following the shooting of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and the murder of several others in Tucson, the mainstream media has stolidly preserved a blackout about the last U.S. congressman to be killed in the line of duty — U.S. Representative Larry McDonald (D-Ga.).



Congressman McDonald was killed on September 1, 1983, when the Soviet Union shot down the Korean Air Lines flight 007, en route from New York City to Seoul, South Korea. There were 269 persons aboard — men, women, children, and Congressman Larry McDonald. At the time, McDonald was chairman of The John Birch Society (a subsidiary of which publishes *The New American*.) He was also instrumental in founding Western Goals Foundation, the stated mission of which was "to strengthen the political, economic and social structure of Western Civilization so as to make any merger with totalitarians impossible."

Despite a few stories correctly identifying Larry McDonald as the last U.S. congressman to be killed while in service, the majority of the media have ignored him in telling of other congressmen killed or murdered.

For instance, Andrea Stone, senior Washington correspondent for AOL News, incorrectly [reported](#):

Rep. Gabrielle Giffords is not the first Congress member to face a violent attack. Some have even lost their lives. *The last to be killed was Rep. Leo Ryan of San Francisco.* The Democrat was leading a delegation investigating an American religious cult in Jonestown, Guyana, when it was ambushed on Nov. 18, 1978. He and four others were killed. [Emphasis added.]

The rest of her report fails to provide any mention of Representative McDonald. Unfortunately, Stone is not alone in her omission. In an interactive slideshow entitled "Deadly Tragedies in Congress," which is accompanied by an article by David A. Graham and Rob Verger on *Newsweek's* [website](#), again no specific mention of Representative McDonald is made.

Other local network television news reports have also neglected to mention Representative McDonald, with some propagating Stone's error in claiming that Representative Ryan was the last U.S. congressman to be killed while in office.

As only a very few reports have brought to light the story of Congressman McDonald's life and



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death, *The New American* deems it only right that he not be forgotten. Our interest in this oversight goes beyond mere sentimentality, since there is the distinct possibility that McDonald's lifelong battle against communism and in defense of the Constitution made him anathema to the liberal establishment — someone whose memory they would rather bury than maintain.

McDonald was born on April 1, 1935 in Atlanta, Georgia to Harold McDonald, Sr. and Callie Grace Patton, who was a cousin of U.S. Army General George S. Patton.

He was born into a family with a long tradition as physicians: his grandfather Paul McDonald was a physician in Georgia, and both his father and older brother Harold, Jr. were urologists, as was Larry himself.

Shortly before his plane was shot down, Representative McDonald was presented with the 1983 American Security Council-Coalition of Peace Through Strength Leadership Award in recognition of his efforts to promote a national security policy of "Peace Through Strength." McDonald received a perfect 100% score rating from the American Security Council (ASC) National Security Voting Index.

ASC President John Fischer, in presenting the award, applauded McDonald for his commitment to America's national defense:

It is with great pride and satisfaction that I announce the recipients of this year's Leadership Awards. Congressman McDonald is one of those far-sighted members of Congress who knows that weakness only invites aggression; and who knows that only a national strategy of Peace Through Strength will ensure this nation's security.

McDonald never tolerated a policy of appeasement or accommodation, prescribed by so many currently in Washington as the solution to dealing with both Communist China and the Russian Federation. McDonald also knew that the best defense against the threat posed by terrorism and communism, which he rightly identified as one in the same, was through an invigorated internal security apparatus; indeed, it was his desire to reinstitute the House Committee on Un-American Activities in order to expose socialist and communist subversion within the government.

Congressman McDonald, who put his country first, was a strong advocate of President George Washington's advice to "avoid entangling alliances," favoring a termination of U.S. participation in the United Nations and NATO.

Like his fellow physician, good friend in Congress and current standard-bearer of liberty Ron Paul, McDonald also called for an end to fiat currency, abolition of the Federal Reserve and the nation's unconstitutional welfare programs, repeal of strangle-hold regulations on the economy, and a return to godly Bible-based principles as the bedrock of American society.

McDonald was a constitutionalist at heart and an anti-communist in his day-to-day struggle to defend the United States from its enemies both foreign and domestic. He had no patience with bigotry and racism, calling in 1977 for congressional investigations into subversive, anti-Semitic, neo-Nazi, and Klan groups.

Once named the nation's top conservative, McDonald was considered by many as a possible presidential contender. There were rumors that he would seek a U.S. Senate seat, possibly in 1986. Sadly, his career and goals were cut short when a Soviet MiG fighter jet reportedly shot down KAL 007 over Sakhalin Island, presumably killing all 269 people aboard — though the full wreckage of the huge aircraft was never found, nor were any of the bodies of its passengers, all of which remain missing to this day.



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A great deal has been [written about](#) the possibility that the plane was actually forced to land on Sakhalin Island, as was initially reported that night, on both television and in the newsprint media, before it was later claimed that it was blown up in mid-air.

Such stories speak of survivors, including Congressman McDonald, being captured and sent to an array of prisons or labor camps throughout the Soviet Union. One person who believes that survivors of KAL-007 may still be alive is Bert Schlossberg, author of the book [Rescue 007](#).

U.S. Senator Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) did not brush aside these claims, as have so many in the mainstream press, dubbing them "conspiracy theories."

Following a letter to Russian President Boris Yeltsin about American POWs, on June 15, 1992, President Yeltsin announced: "Our archives have shown that it is true — some of them [American POWs from World War II and the Vietnam War] were transferred to the territory of the U.S.S.R. and were kept in labor camps... We can only surmise that some of them may still be alive."

In a reply [letter](#) to Yeltsin, Senator Helms wrote:

The KAL-007 tragedy was one of the most tense incidences of the entire Cold War. However, now that relations between our two nations have improved substantially, I believe that it is time to resolve the mysteries surrounding this event. Clearing the air on this issue could help further to improve relations.

Accordingly, I respectfully request that the government of the Russian Republic gain access to the files of the former KGB and the Ministry of Defense in order to resolve the attached questions. I hope that you will personally intervene with the relevant authorities of the former Soviet Union in order to provide answers to these questions.

Among the requests of Sen. Helms was the release of the following information from Soviet archives:

- a) A list of the names of any living passengers and crew members from the airplane;
- b) A list of missing passengers and crew;
- c) A list of dead passengers and crew;
- d) A list and explanation of what happened to the bodies of any dead passengers and crew;

Please provide detailed information on the fate of U.S. Congressman Larry McDonald.

The Kremlin reciprocated only by releasing KAL 007's "black box" and the real-time radio communiqués between the Soviet fighter pilot and his commanding officer on land. A formal response to the fate of Larry McDonald and the other passengers was never given.

Before reports surfaced on the possibility that there may have been survivors, the accepted belief was and still remains that all aboard were in fact killed in a mid-air explosion caused by a missile from a Soviet MiG.

At the time of the KAL tragedy in 1983, Congressman Ron Paul wrote the following on the loss of Congressman McDonald:

The murder of Georgia Congressman Larry McDonald came as a surprise to me. The conservative Democrat and I had been friends since 1974. We had worked together on legislation, and I was one of his admirers in Congress.

I am so sorry to say it, but Larry didn't have a lot of fans in the Washington establishment. And for



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a very good reason. Larry didn't share the values of the Washington establishment, and he made no bones about making it known that he didn't.

Unlike so many in Washington, Larry had no illusions about the nature of the Soviet Union. He believed — and he was right, of course — that the Soviet Union is not another law-abiding, peaceful government with which we can negotiate in good faith. He recognized the Soviets for what they are — a ruthless, lawless and aggressive power bent on world domination through military force.

Larry McDonald was a loyal husband and loving father, a patriot beyond measure, and a man who shall never be forgotten here at *The New American* magazine.

Now as Congress seeks to impose stricter gun-control measures, it is only fitting that we look back to the words of Congressman McDonald, who championed the Constitution so many times in and out of the chambers of Congress. The following excerpt, from his book *We Hold These Truths* (1976), remains relevant today amid escalating attempts to restrict gun rights:

Today, because of great public concern over rising crime and other dangerous social conditions, advocates of federal gun-control laws are receiving more support than ever before. But confiscating arms from law-abiding citizens, in an effort to reduce crime, is like outlawing ballpoint pens to prevent spelling errors. The solution to our problems is not better gun control, but better crime control. The swift apprehension of criminals, combined with quick, sure, and firm justice, is the only approach that will work.

Is it any wonder that the Ministry of Truth news managers at the establishment media have largely consigned references to McDonald to the "[memory hole](#)"?

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