

Ms. Meg Greenfield
Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20071

7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, Md. 21701
8/23/88

Dear Ms. Greenfield,

I intend this as a letter to the editor but I hope you'll find time to read it.

The Post's lead editorial, "The Vincennes Report," eulogizes the Crowe report, without reading it or, worse, without understanding it, while without any question repeating the Navy's claim, that the civilian airbus shot down "failed to answer repeated calls on both civilian and military channels to identify itself."

However, as the Post itself reported, there is no indication that the Navy ever warned the plane it shot down.

As the Post reported (8/20/88, p. 20, col. 1, graf 5), "At 10:52 the Vincennes radioed: 'Iranian F14, this is USN Warship. 1-1'."

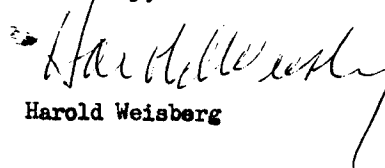
Why should the airbus have responded to a warning addressed to "Iranian F14," how can the Navy claim to have warned the airbus and how can the Post ignore this?

There are many flaws in this report, which the Post did not analyze. Certainly in neither the editorial nor news columns was there any critical appraisal, as there should have been, particularly because other foundations of the report are not in accord with fact as reported earlier.

One is that there was an ongoing battle. Earlier reporting is that the battle had ended, after which the airbus took off.

With a tragedy of this great magnitude something more than blind, uncritical acceptance of the official report is required of a press that really prizes its freedom and intends to meet the special obligations of the press in a society such as ours.

Sincerely,


Harold Weisberg