

The Council is meeting today in emergency special session at the request of the Governments of the Republic of Korea and Canada. We are meeting to consider as urgently as possible the events surrounding the deplorable destruction on the first of this month of a civilian aircraft of Korean Air Lines while on a regularly scheduled flight from Anchorage, Alaska to Seoul, Korea. This destruction entailed the loss of the lives of all 269 passengers and crew members who were aboard the aircraft, a Boeing 747 designated as KAL flight 007. There were ten Canadians among those killed. We are meeting to consider as well what measures might and should be taken by the International Civil Aviation Organization and its member states to ensure that there will be no recurrence of this tragic incident. It is to this aspect of our deliberations that my Government attaches particular importance.

The destruction of the Korean Air Lines aircraft by a Soviet military aircraft has outraged both Canadian and world opinion. It has been condemned as barbarous and murderous by many of the governments of states members of this Organization and of this Council. It has been the subject of emergency consideration by the Security Council of the United Nations and during that consideration there were repeated demands that everything possible should be done to prevent any repetition ever again of what was deliberately done on September 1, 1983. More specifically, there have been repeated calls, during the Security Council's consideration of this destruction, upon ICAO to become involved actively in the pursuit of this endeavour. We are here to concentrate our efforts on that objective and we must base our efforts on the technical expertise available to us and not on our emotions, no matter how justifiably they have been aroused.

My own Government was among the first of those to seek to involve ICAO. On September 2, 1983, the Canadian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, the Honourable Gérard Pelletier, said in his first address to the Security Council on this subject that Canada considered "that the International Civil Aviation Organization...should be requested to carry out an urgent and thorough investigation of the incident with a view to making recommendations for the improvement of international civil aviation regulations and practices which will preclude ever again the repetition of such an incident." This suggestion was endorsed by many subsequent participants in the Security Council's deliberations and was welcomed widely by the media in most parts of the world.