

# PRESS RELEASE



# COMMUNIQUE

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CANADA

MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES EXTÉRIEURES

DO NOT PUBLISH BEFORE 15.00

MAY 24, 1968

The Department of External Affairs today made the following announcement:

On May 11, 1968 at 6:30 a.m. on a train between Khabarovsk and Nakhodka in eastern Siberia, Soviet officials and others purporting to be civilians forcibly entered the compartment occupied by the Assistant Canadian Forces Attaché (Air) in Moscow, Lt.-Col. J.V. Watson, and his wife. Shortly afterward, a Major of the Militia (Police) in uniform joined the intruders, who used physical violence against both Col. Watson and his wife while conducting a search of their compartment. The claim was made without any foundation in fact that the Attaché had photographed a military air field which the train had allegedly passed shortly before the forced entry. Two cameras in the compartment containing unexposed film were seized as well as the Attaché's notebook containing travel notes related to the journey. Acting in accordance with standing instructions intended to prevent subsequent tampering with blank film, the Attaché sought to spoil both films by exposure to light but was successful with only one. The cameras were later returned but not the films or notebook.

During a period of over one hour in which a search and questioning of the Attaché took place, the senior Canadian Forces Attaché in Moscow, Capt. McDowall, and his wife, who occupied another compartment in the same car, were denied access to Col. Watson's compartment. Capt. McDowall's compartment was also entered without his permission and subjected to a search.

In view of the impossibility of ruling out further indignities, the Canadian party, after reaching its destination in Tokyo, abandoned plans for returning by the