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Canada condemns destruction of Korean airliner

On August 31, a Korean Air Lines jetliner carrying 269 passengers was shot down by a missile fired from a Soviet fighter. At least ten Canadians died in the crash. Canada has condemned the attack, both at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe in Madrid and at the UN Security Council, where Canadian Ambassador Gérard Pelletier described it as "nothing short of murder". In Ottawa, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs Allan MacEachen and Transport Minister Lloyd Axworthy announced a 60-day suspension of flights by the Soviet airline Aeroflot to Canada. Mr. MacEachen made the following statement in Ottawa on September 5:

The Soviet government has informally reported to my department that, as of September 3, no survivors had been found in the area of the search. Nor were the remains of any passengers found as of that date. Some countries have asked the Soviet government to allow them to participate in the search, but to date permission has been denied.

The USSR has a clear obligation under the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation to institute an inquiry into any accident involving a foreign-registered aircraft in Soviet territory and to allow the Republic of Korea to be present at the official Soviet inquiry into the circumstances of this disaster.

For our part, we have still not received an official response from the Soviet government to our demand for an explanation of the circumstances

surrounding the tragic death of the Canadians on board. Indeed, far from expressions of regret or apology, the only comments from Moscow are a repetition, with minor variations, of the TASS accounts which world public

opinion has dismissed.

I want you to know that we continue to maintain our position that the USSR must explain this disaster. We have provided ample time and opportunity. I have sent a message to Foreign Minister Gromyko asking him to give this matter his urgent personal attention.

To impress upon the Soviet authori-

ties the gravity and determination with which we view this matter I have in consultation with my colleague the Minister of Transport, decided to suspend the rights of Aeroflot to the use of Montreal Mirabel airport for its scheduled and charter flights for a period of 60 days. This will take effect as soon as formalities have been completed.

I hope that this suspension will prompt a review by the Soviet authorities of the merits

of continuing to evade their responsibility for the death of Canadians and of so many other innocent passengers.

I want to add that we are taking this measure as an aggrieved party. We would welcome similar action by other nations.



Allan MacEachen (left) and Lloyd Axworthy announce 60-day suspension of all Aeroflot flights into Canada.

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