



Statements and Speeches

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KOREAN AIRLINE INCIDENT ISSUE AT UN SECURITY COUNCIL (2)

Second statement by the Honourable Gérard Pelletier, Permanent Representative, Ambassador for the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations, to the Security Council, New York, September 12, 1983.

Mr. President: On behalf of the government of Canada, I am grateful to the Council for this further opportunity to participate in this emergency debate. It has been ten days since I last addressed this Council on behalf of my government to express the horror and outrage that is felt in Canada and to propose a series of actions for Council consideration in dealing with the deliberate destruction of a Korean 747 airliner.

In a long-delayed statement, the Soviet government has finally acknowledged that its fighter aircraft did indeed "stop" with missiles this defenceless civilian aircraft. The grudging condolences expressed to the families of the bereaved by the Soviet government are far from adequate. Where is any sense or expression of remorse? When will the government of the Soviet Union accept responsibility for the consequences of its shocking act? Vain attempts to evade responsibility by blaming others, inadequate and implausible explanations and the absence of any offer of help or assistance to the victims' families, all mark the Soviet retreat into paranoia.

In Madrid on September 7, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko stated, and I quote, "The borders of the Soviet Union are sacred." We are not here, Mr. President, to quarrel about the inviolability of Soviet frontiers, but we cannot and will not accept that the lives of innocent civilians should be so viciously subordinated to this assertion of Soviet sovereignty. We find the Soviet 1982 law most disturbing. It violates internationally agreed upon rules for interception. Could this tragedy be repeated should another civilian airliner innocently stray into Soviet air space? The Soviet Union has left no doubt about its intention. The international community must make every effort to avoid such a tragic repetition. Borders may or may not be sacred, but the lives of innocent civilians are unquestionably so. May I remind the Soviet government of President Podgorny's comments on the fiftieth anniversary of Soviet civil aviation in 1973. Again I quote, "It is well said that civil aviation needs a clear sky. Our attitude in this regard is fundamental and unswerving. We set human life and well-being above everything else." Why I ask, has the government of the Soviet Union repudiated these noble concepts.

Canada, an aggrieved party in these events, still has not received a satisfactory official response from the Soviet government to our demand for an explanation of the circumstances surrounding the tragic death of the Canadians on board.

The government of Canada maintains its position that the USSR must explain fully its part in this disaster. We have provided ample time and opportunity to do so. On September 6, the Canadian Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, again called for a full and impartial international investigation. I repeat that call here today. Allegations
