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CANADIAN DIPLOMAT IN BAGHDAD DECLARED PERSONA NON GRATA

The Department of External Affairs has been advised that the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs has declared Mr. W. A. McKenzie, First Secretary and Chargé d'Affaires a.i. at the Canadian Embassy in Baghdad, persona non grata. While no explanation or justification was given for this action, it is presumably in retaliation for the Canadian Government having requested an Iraqi Second Secretary, Mr. Abdul Latif M. Al-Niaimi, to leave Canada. Mr. Al-Niaimi left on June 20.

Mr. Al-Niaimi's departure from Canada was requested because he had been engaged in questionable intelligence activities similar in nature to those carried on by the former Minister Plenipotentiary at the Iraqi Embassy, Mr. Abu Al-Khail, whose departure from Canada was requested in August 1977. In particular, Mr. Al-Niaimi is known to have paid out sums of money for reports on individuals in the Canadian Kurdish community and his agents have been involved in efforts to disrupt Kurdish organizations. In requesting his departure, the Canadian Government reiterated its position that the carrying on of such intelligence activities, whether or not directed against the Canadian Government, is incompatible with the diplomatic status of personnel serving with an embassy in Ottawa.

The Canadian Government has conveyed to the Government of Iraq through the Iraqi Ambassador in Ottawa, a strong protest at its arbitrary and unjustified action in expelling the Canadian Chargé d'Affaires. In a diplomatic note, given to the Ambassador on July 7, the Department of External Affairs rejected in principle any suggestion that retaliation in any form against Canadian personnel in

Baghdad was justified or acceptable. Pointing out that Mr. Al-Niaimi's departure had been requested because he had been engaged in intelligence activities which the Canadian Government is not prepared to tolerate, the Department's note stated that neither Mr. McKenzie nor any other member of the Canadian Embassy staff in Baghdad had engaged in any kind of improper activities and that no such allegations had been made. There was, therefore, no basis whatsoever for the action taken by the Iraqi authorities.

Mr. McKenzie, aged 40, was born in England, and received his Bachelor of Science and Master of Business Administration degrees from the University of Toronto in 1962 and 1964 respectively. He joined the Trade Commissioner Service of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce in 1965 and has served in Melbourne, Australia, Seattle and in Cairo, Egypt. Mr. McKenzie is single. Mr. McKenzie will be reassigned shortly.