



## PRIME MINISTER

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

STATEMENT TO THE PARLIAMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR HAWKE

6 SEPTEMBER 1983

MR SPEAKER, I SEEK LEAVE TO MAKE A STATEMENT TO THE HOUSE ON THE TRAGIC EPISODE WHICH SHOCKED THE WORLD LAST WEEK.

ON THE BASIS OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO IT, THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO DOUBT THAT KOREAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 7, EN ROUTE FROM ANCHORAGE TO SEOUL, WAS SHOT DOWN BY A SOVIET FIGHTER AIRCRAFT EARLY IN THE MORNING OF 1 SEPTEMBER AUSTRALIAN EASTERN STANDARD TIME.

MR SPEAKER, THERE ARE MANY UNANSWERED QUESTIONS SURROUNDING THIS DISASTER. THE BASIC ONES ARE:

- . HOW WAS IT POSSIBLE FOR MILITARY AIRCRAFT TO FIRE ON AND DESTROY A CIVILIAN AIRLINER IN PEACE TIME; AND
- . WHY HAS THE SOVIET UNION BEEN UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO PRODUCE A COHERENT, CONVINCING AND SUITABLY REGRETFUL ACCOUNT OF THESE APPALLING CIRCUMSTANCES.

WHATEVER THE ANSWER TO THESE AND TO THE OTHER IMPORTANT QUESTION OF HOW THE AIRLINER STRAYED SO FAR OFF COURSE INTO SOVIET AIRSPACE, THE SIMPLE FACT IS THAT AN UNARMED CIVILIAN AIRLINER SERVING NO MILITARY PURPOSE WAS SHOT DOWN BY A SOVIET FIGHTER AIRCRAFT. THERE CAN BE NO JUSTIFICATION FOR SUCH A BARBARIC ACT. 269 PASSENGERS AND CREW, INCLUDING 4 AUSTRALIANS, HAVE DIED.

FOLLOWING THIS TRAGEDY, THE GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN ACTION TO BRING TO THE ATTENTION OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT ITS DEEP CONCERN AND SHOCK AND HAS SOUGHT A PROMPT AND FULL EXPLANATION OF SOVIET ACTIONS. THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN AUSTRALIA WAS CALLED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON 2 SEPTEMBER AND REQUESTED TO PROVIDE A FULL AND PROPER ACCOUNT OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THIS UNJUSTIFIABLE ACT. ON THE SAME DAY, OUR AMBASSADOR IN MOSCOW, MR EVANS, CALLED ON THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTRY AND MADE THE SAME REQUEST.

SO FAR, THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES HAVE PROVIDED NO INFORMATION IN RESPONSE TO OUR REQUEST. THEY HAVE SIMPLY DRAWN OUR ATTENTION TO STATEMENTS MADE BY THE OFFICIAL SOVIET NEWSAGENCY, TASS. APART FROM THE FACT THAT THE STATEMENTS SO FAR ISSUED BY TASS HAVE BEEN TOTALLY INADEQUATE AND DELIBERATELY MISLEADING - THEY, HAVE, FOR EXAMPLE, MADE THE PREPOSTEROUS CLAIM THAT THE KOREAN AIRLINER WAS ON AN INTELLIGENCE MISSION - THEY ARE QUITE INAPPROPRIATE AS COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS.

THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND I HAVE MADE CRYSTAL CLEAR THE GOVERNMENT'S OUTRAGE AND CONDEMNATION AT WHAT HAS OCCURRED. WE WILL MAINTAIN PERSISTENT AND STRONG PRESSURE FOR AN ADEQUATE EXPLANATION.

I HAVE PERSONALLY EXPRESSED OUR CONDOLENCES TO THE BEREAVED AUSTRALIAN FAMILIES. I HAVE ALSO SENT A MESSAGE OF SYMPATHY TO PRESIDENT CHUN DOO HWAN OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, WHO WILL BE PAYING AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO AUSTRALIA NEXT MONTH. PRESIDENT CHUN HAS EXPRESSED TO ME HIS COUNTRY'S APPRECIATION OF OUR SUPPORT AND SYMPATHY.

AUSTRALIA WAS AT THE FOREFRONT OF THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH CALLED FOR AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO DISCUSS THIS TRAGEDY. THIS TOOK PLACE ON FRIDAY 2 SEPTEMBER AND WILL RESUME ON 6 SEPTEMBER (US TIME). THE AUSTRALIAN ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, MR JOSEPH, EXPRESSED AUSTRALIA'S SHOCK AND INDIGNATION AT THE DOWNING OF THE KAL FLIGHT. DESCRIBING THE INCIDENT AS A "MASSACRE IN THE SKY", MR JOSEPH SAID:

"AUSTRALIA JOINS WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN DEMANDING AN IMMEDIATE AND FULL ACCOUNTING FROM THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES. WE HAVE PUT THIS REQUEST BILATERALLY AND I REPEAT IT HERE TODAY IN A MULTILATERAL CONTEXT. THE EXPLANATIONS SO FAR EMANATING FROM MOSCOW ABOUT THE EPISODE ARE IN OUR VIEW ENTIRELY INADEQUATE. THERE HAS BEEN A REFUSAL THUS FAR

EITHER TO ACKNOWLEDGE RESPONSIBILITY OR EVEN TO EXTEND A CONVINCING EXPRESSION OF REGRET FOR THE ACTION. THIS IS DEPLORABLE. WE APPEAL TO THE SOVIET UNION, IF THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES GIVE IN TO THE INSTINCT TO COVER UP, IT WILL ONLY CONFIRM THE WORST FEARS OF THOSE WHO SUSPECT THEM MOST, WITH REPERCUSSIONS ACROSS THE SPECTRUM OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS."

MR JOSEPH WENT ON TO SAY:

"IN THIS REGARD, MR PRESIDENT, I MUST SAY THAT ONE CANNOT BUT FEEL PROFOUNDLY DISTURBED BY THE LATEST TASS STATEMENT WHICH WAS READ OUT TO THE COUNCIL EARLIER THIS AFTERNOON BY THE DELEGATION OF THE USSR. WE SEE NO ELEMENT OF CONTRITION IN THE STATEMENT. IT AMOUNTS, AT LEAST ON FIRST READING, TO BLAMING THE VICTIMS THEMSELVES. I WOULD REMIND THE SOVIET DELEGATION THAT SOME OF THOSE VICTIMS WERE AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS AND I WOULD SAY FIRMLY ON THE BEHALF OF THESE VICTIMS, NOW DECEASED, THAT THEY WERE ENTIRELY BLAMELESS IN THIS APPALLING EPISODE. WE REJECT THIS LATEST ATTEMPTED EVASION OF RESPONSIBILITY."

I BELIEVE THAT THIS HOUSE WOULD FULLY SUPPORT THE STANCE TAKEN BY THIS GOVERNMENT BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS.

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MR SPEAKER, THIS INCIDENT IS ONE OF THE GRAVEST CONCERN TO EVERY NATION. IT IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH ACCEPTED NORMS OF CIVILISED BEHAVIOUR BETWEEN NATIONS AND CONTRARY TO PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW. MOREOVER, IT HAS VERY SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR THE SAFETY OF AIR NAVIGATION.

SADLY, THIS INCIDENT IS NOT THE FIRST OF ITS KIND. HONOURABLE MEMBERS WILL RECALL THAT IN 1978 SOVIET FIGHTERS OPENED FIRE ON AND FORCED TO LAND ANOTHER KAL FLIGHT, ALSO WITH SOME LOSS OF LIFE. EARLIER, IN 1973, A LIBYAN AIRCRAFT STRAYED UNWITTINGLY OVER THE SINAI DESERT AND WAS SHOT DOWN BY ISRAELI FIGHTERS WITH A LOSS OF OVER 100 PASSENGERS AND CREW. THAT ACTION WAS TAKEN ONLY AFTER THE PILOT ACKNOWLEDGED, BUT DID NOT HEED, THE WARNINGS AND SIGNALS GIVEN BY THE FIGHTERS. FURTHERMORE, THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT PROMPTLY PROVIDED DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT, ISSUED A STATEMENT EXPRESSING "DEEP SORROW" AT THE LOSS OF LIFE AND ANNOUNCED EX GRATIA PAYMENTS OF COMPENSATION TO THE FAMILIES OF THOSE KILLED IN EXPLICIT DEFERENCE TO HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS.

MR SPEAKER, THERE IS A GRIM IRONY IN THE FACT THAT THE SOVIET REPRESENTATIVE TO AN EMERGENCY SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANISATION (ICAO) IN FEBRUARY 1973 DESCRIBED THAT INCIDENT AS A "CRIMINAL ACT OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM" AND SAID THAT "ICAO COULD NOT REMAIN ALOOF FROM THE BARBARIC ACT COMMITTED BY ISRAEL."

IN 1955, COMPENSATION WAS ALSO OFFERED BY THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT AFTER ITS AIRFORCE HAD SHOT DOWN AN ISRAELI AIRLINER IN BULGARIAN AIRSPACE KILLING 64 PASSENGERS AND CREW. THE BULGARIANS OFFERED TO PAY COMPENSATION TO THE FAMILIES OF THOSE KILLED, TO PUNISH "THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CATASTROPHE" AND TO TAKE MEASURES TO PREVENT A REPITITION OF SUCH INCIDENTS. THERE ARE, THEREFORE, MR SPEAKER, PRECEDENTS FOR THE KIND OF RESPONSE WHICH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAS EVERY RIGHT NOW TO EXPECT OF THE SOVIET UNION.

MR SPEAKER, THERE IS ANOTHER DIMENSION TO THIS TRAGEDY, TO WHICH I WOULD LIKE TO DRAW THE ATTENTION OF THE HOUSE. THE INCIDENT IS A REMINDER OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF CONTINUED HOSTILITY AND LACK OF COMMUNICATION AND DIALOGUE IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA. AUSTRALIA HAS RECOGNISED TWO STATES AND TWO GOVERNMENTS ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA SINCE 1974. OTHER WESTERN NATIONS WHICH HAVE RELATIONS WITH THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA (SOUTH KOREA) HAVE MADE CLEAR THAT THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO RECOGNISE THE DPRK (NORTH KOREA) IF THE DPRK AND ITS FRIENDS, INCLUDING THE SOVIET UNION, WOULD COME TO TERMS WITH THE REALITY THAT THERE HAS EXISTED IN SOUTH KOREA FOR OVER 30 YEARS A SOVEREIGN GOVERNMENT, THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA.

IT IS OUR FIRM CONVICTION THAT THE CONTINUING FAILURE OF THE SOVIET UNION AND OTHERS TO RECOGNISE THAT REALITY, WHILE ATTEMPTING TO DENY THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA ITS LEGITIMATE PLACE IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND ITS RIGHTS IN INTERNATIONAL LAW HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES

IN WHICH THIS APPALLING ACTION HAS TAKEN PLACE.

MR SPEAKER, CABINET DISCUSSED THIS MATTER YESTERDAY AND EXAMINED POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION WHICH AUSTRALIA, TOGETHER WITH OTHER NATIONS PRINCIPALLY AFFECTED, MIGHT TAKE. IN ITS DELIBERATIONS THE GOVERNMENT WAS MINDFUL OF THE CALM AND DEEPLY MOVING WORDS OF MR RAY GRENFELL, THE BROTHER OF ONE OF THE AUSTRALIAN VICTIMS, WHO AFTER EXPRESSING HIS SHOCK AND DISBELIEF AT THE DESTRUCTION OF AN UNARMED PASSENGER AIRCRAFT SAID "BUT WE DON'T BELIEVE THERE SHOULD BE ANY FURTHER VIOLENCE OR RETRIBUTION - ONE ACT LIKE THAT DOES NOT DESERVE ANOTHER ACT".

WE HAVE DECIDED TO CONTINUE TO PRESS THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES FOR A FULL ACCOUNTING OF THEIR ACTIONS. WE ARE EXAMINING WHAT STEPS MIGHT BE TAKEN TO STRENGTHEN THE SAFETY OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION. WE ARE SUPPORTING THE CONVENING OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANISATION IN MONTREAL NEXT WEEK. THERE WE WILL SEEK A FULL ACCOUNTING BY THE SOVIET UNION AND A THOROUGH IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHICAGO CONVENTION.

THE SHOOTING DOWN OF THE KOREAN AIRCRAFT WAS A CLEAR INFRINGEMENT OF CUSTOMARY INTERNATIONAL LAW AND OF THE PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE 1944 CHICAGO CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION, TO WHICH THE USSR IS A PARTY.

IT IS OPEN TO THE GOVERNMENT, UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW, TO CLAIM COMPENSATION FROM THE USSR FOR THE LOSS OF AUSTRALIAN LIVES. WE ARE GIVING CLOSE CONSIDERATION TO THIS POSSIBILITY. OBVIOUSLY ANY AMOUNT OF COMPENSATION WILL NOT RECOMPENSE THE GRIEF OF THOSE FAMILIES WHO HAVE LOST LOVED ONES IN THIS DISASTER.

THE GOVERNMENT REGARDS THIS TRAGEDY AS AN AFFRONT TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. AS A RESULT, AUSTRALIA WILL SEEK TO CO-ORDINATE ITS RESPONSE AS WIDELY AS POSSIBLE WITH OTHER COUNTRIES AND PARTICULARLY WITH THE COUNTRIES OF THE ASIA/PACIFIC REGION.

IN THIS CONNECTION, I SPOKE WITH US SECRETARY OF STATE, GEORGE SHULTZ ON 5 SEPTEMBER AND HAVE CONFIRMED THAT OUR ATTITUDE TO THIS DISASTER IS CLOSELY CONSISTENT WITH THAT OF THE UNITED STATES. PRESIDENT REAGAN'S STRONG, CLEAR AND MEASURED STATEMENT THIS MORNING EXPRESSES THE PROFOUND CONCERN AND ABHORRENCE FELT BY ALL CIVILISED COUNTRIES AT WHAT HAS OCCURRED, WHILE KEEPING OPEN THE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION ESSENTIAL TO PRESERVE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY.

MR SPEAKER, THE SOVIET UNION IS NOW SEEKING TO EVADE ITS RESPONSIBILITIES, TO SHIFT THE BLAME AND TO CATEGORISE THE JUSTIFIED INTERNATIONAL OUTRAGE AT ITS ACTION, AS CONFECTED INDIGNATION FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES. THE GOVERNMENT REITERATES THAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT MUST PROVIDE A FULL AND ADEQUATE



ACCOUNT OF THIS TRAGEDY. I AM SURE THAT THE HOUSE  
WILL JOIN ME IN CALLING ON THE USSR TO CEASE HIDING  
BEHIND EVASIVE STATEMENTS AND TO ACCEPT ITS  
RESPONSIBILITIES BEFORE THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY  
FOR THE TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES OF ITS ACTION.

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MR SPEAKER, I SEEK LEAVE TO MOVE A RESOLUTION.

(WHEN LEAVE GRANTED)

I MOVE THAT THIS HOUSE:

- (1) EXPRESSES AUSTRALIA'S SHOCK AND INDIGNATION AT THE TOTALLY UNJUSTIFIED DESTRUCTION OF A KOREAN AIRLINES, BOEING 747 BY SOVIET FIGHTER AIRCRAFT;
- (2) EXTENDS ITS DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO THE FAMILIES OF THE AUSTRALIAN AND OTHER VICTIMS;
- (3) CALLS UPON THE USSR TO GIVE A FULL, TRUTHFUL, PROMPT AND APPROPRIATELY REGRETFUL ACCOUNT OF THIS TRAGIC EPISODE;
- (4) URGES THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO TAKE MEASURES TO PREVENT THE RECURRENCE OF SUCH A TRAGEDY; AND
- (5) SUPPORTS THE RESPONSE OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AS OUTLINED IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT.