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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MONTREAL, 13 June 1952 -- The Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization today designated three of its members -- delegates of Belgium, Brazil and Canada to consult with special representatives of India and Pakistan on the action to be taken by Council on a complaint received from the Government of India which charges that Pakistan is discriminating against its civil air transportation, and to report back to Council next week. Representing India in the discussions is His Excellency Shri R. R. Saksena, Indian High Commissioner to Canada; representing Pakistan is His Excellency M. Ikramullah, Pakistani High Commissioner to Canada.

According to the Indian complaint, the Government of Pakistan has taken action contrary to the Convention on International Civil Aviation and the International Air Services Transit Agreement to which both governments are parties. India, the complaint states, wishes to run commercial services between its capital, New Delhi, and Kabul, Afghanistan. The direct route between these two points is 642 miles. A prohibited area runs along the entire western boundary of West Pakistan and civil aircraft are not allowed to fly over this area. For this reason a trip from New Delhi to Kabul must be flown via Karachi, then through Iran up to Afghanistan with a total distance of approximately 1900 miles. The Government of India believes that the extent and location of this prohibited area are not reasonable and that the area interferes unnecessarily with air navigation. Furthermore, the Indian brief charges that an Iranian airline operates a scheduled international air service across this prohibited area and therefore the Government of India feels "reluctantly compelled to conclude that the real intention of the Government of Pakistan is to prevent easy communication between India and Afghanistan by prohibiting flights of aircraft by an easy and direct route".

In reply, the Government of Pakistan stated that the existing prohibited areas "are exactly those which have existed in undivided India since 1935" and believed that India cannot reasonably complain as these areas "have all along been considered essential for security and other reasons".

Pakistan's note also states that only Iranian Airways has been permitted to fly across this prohibited area between Zahidan and Karchi. This has been done because "while an airline carrying the nationality of a Muslim State such as Iran could be allowed to traverse a narrow air corridor across the prohibited areas to which the Search and Rescue operations could be confined, and to the occupants of which the attitude of the inhabitants of the tribal area might reasonably be considered to be friendly in the event of a forced landing, no guarantee for effective search and rescue operations over wide area could be made and the attitude of the inhabitants of the tribal areas towards an Indian airliner forced down would be completely unpredictable. In fact we could even say that the tribal people are definitely unfriendly to India on account of India's attitude over the Kashmir and the Pushtoonistan issue. The tribesmen are all armed and there are reasons to believe that they take delight in having snap shots at the flying aircraft. It was therefore entirely to ensure the safety of aircraft of the Indian airline themselves that the prohibition of flying across the prohibited areas was enforced and the Indian protest has really come to us as a surprise. It may be noted by the Council that a similar prohibition was extended to K.L.M. (Royal Dutch Airlines) when they applied for a similar concession in view of the doubtful attitude of the inhabitants of the tribal area in the event of a forced landing there, even though there are no special reasons for the tribesmen to be unfriendly towards the Dutch".

In summary, the Government of Pakistan declares that "the application made by India should be rejected in the interests of safety of air passengers and crew".

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