

Canada didn't leave it there. President Traoré of Mali was the co-President with Canada of the Children's Summit. After conversations between the Prime Minister of Canada and President Traoré, his Foreign Minister went to Baghdad, tried to see if there could be movement, came back and reported to my colleague, the Associate Minister of National Defence, who was here over Christmas, and senior officials, to see if there was some movement. And, in many other ways, we have been active through the Commonwealth, La Francophonie and other connections in the Third World because we recognized that we had to do everything possible to try to persuade Saddam Hussein to understand how serious this issue was and how serious the resolve of the world is.

Fourth, in terms of peacekeeping, it may be that there will be a need for some peacekeeping presence if we are able to secure a withdrawal of the Iraqi forces. It would be better if that were largely Arab, but clearly there would also be a need for the kind of expertise that Canada is uniquely qualified to provide. That was raised with us by Egyptian leaders; was discussed by my colleague, the Associate Minister, when she was in the region; it was part of the offer made to the United Nations by the Prime Minister in the letter that I delivered the other night.

Fifth, on the question of an Arab solution, which many were seeking during much of the crisis, because they thought that other solutions may not work, Canada adopted an aggressive approach to try to encourage Arab leaders to work, and to work together. That included, in our view, trying to overcome, as a practical matter, the difference that existed between King Hussein of Jordan and other Arab leaders because Hussein and Jordan are of fundamental importance in the region. It would be better if we had those nations working together rather than at cross-purposes.

That involved a number of conversations -- contacts between the Prime Minister and the King, the Prime Minister and President Mubarak, and a number of others. But it also involved the visit I was able to make to the region, and the long conversation with King Hussein during which we discussed explicitly and at length, the question of the hostages and whether it made any sense at all for Saddam Hussein to continue to keep the hostages. I made the case to King Hussein that the taking of hostages made no sense. King Hussein told me that he intended to go again to Baghdad. After that trip, as a result of proposals from him, from Yasser Arafat, and from others, Saddam Hussein made the decision to let all the hostages go.

Sixth, in terms of consultations, we are in regular daily contact with Foreign Ministers and Heads of Government of a range of other countries, 50 or 60, not just the coalition