

Indeed, there has been a continued military build-up inside Kuwait, to a point where more than fifty percent of Iraqi forces now appear stationed there, and there is no evidence whatsoever that withdrawal is being considered as an option. Worse, we have all seen recent confirmation that the brutal occupation of Kuwait continues, with Iraqi forces violating every norm of civilized behaviour and human rights.

At your last Committee session on the crisis, we discussed the diplomatic efforts that had been pursued, including my own trip to the region, in the period leading up to and surrounding the passage of Security Council Resolution 678. Since that time a number of senior foreign leaders, including President Chadli Bendjedid of Algeria, have been actively trying to find a peaceful path to resolving the crisis, always on the basis of Security Council resolutions. I am afraid that their efforts have fallen far short of hopes, and I regret to say that they are increasingly of the view that Iraq is determined to hold onto Kuwait at any cost.

Of greatest concern in this regard has been Iraq's attitude to discussions with the United States which President Bush offered one month ago. Although Saddam Hussein's initial acceptance of the proposal was an encouraging sign, his subsequent refusal to accept a sensible date and his efforts to establish pre-conditions for the talks have unfortunately shown an unwillingness to approach the dialogue seriously.

At the same time, the international coalition arrayed against Iraq remains firm. In spite of Iraqi efforts to split the consensus, regional and other governments have demonstrated their determination to remain together in opposition to the Iraqi invasion and annexation of Kuwait. Although some commentators have suggested that this collective resolve may have been weakened by the recent announcement by Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze that he would be resigning, I am persuaded that the Soviet Union remains unchanged in its support for our common resolve.

In spite of the lack of recent positive signs, the Government is determined that no stone be left unturned in our efforts to find a peaceful solution to the crisis based on Iraqi compliance with Security Council resolutions. We remain in constant contact with regional and other leaders. During my recent visit to the Middle East, I explained that while Canada could not accept any linkage of the Gulf crisis with the Arab-Israeli dispute, we recognize that durable solutions to all the