

There are other lessons. As the Prime Minister said on February 8th, one such lesson is that reckless transfers of arms must come to an end. Canada's commitment and record on arms control entitles us to place this item high on the world's agenda. I reviewed with leaders of other countries some of our proposals to reduce the flow and risk of arms. Progress, of course, will be slow, but everyone I met in the immediate aftermath of a decade of conflict in the Gulf acknowledged the need to address this problem, and to do so practically and persistently. In some Gulf countries, the immediate reflex may be to buy new arms to deal with threats they believe will continue. That underlines the need for countries like Canada to advance proposals like those the Prime Minister set out.

But for real peace and security to emerge, and for arms transfers to diminish, the underlying causes of tension have to be resolved. These tensions -- many of which relate to enduring disputes between Israel and her neighbours -- were a major topic of my discussions.

No one in the Middle East has forgotten a moment of history, and there is a lot of history to overcome. There is now, however, an opportunity -- now, but not for long. The world must not lose it.

Many of us have said that the recent events have changed the Middle East forever. Canada's purpose has been to make those changes for the better -- to strengthen the United Nations, to increase the control of arms and to reduce the risk of war, and to resolve the tensions at the root of insecurity in the Middle East.

I congratulated Mr. Perez de Cuellar, on behalf of the people of Canada, for his resolution during this crisis. He thanked Canada for our support, and believed that Canada had set an example for other states by our determination to settle this crisis through the United Nations.

He informed me that the United Nations is poised to police the separation of forces, once an official request is received from the Government of Kuwait.

He also urged us to try to heal some of the wounds of this crisis by helping leaders with whom Canada has close ties -- such as King Hussein of Jordan. He was concerned about the Palestinians whose leadership had been so criticized, but whose rights represent a continuing challenge to the reputation for fairness and effectiveness of the United Nations.

Indeed, this issue dominated many of my subsequent discussions.