

This decision was taken after more than 75 hours of debate on the Gulf situation on September 24, 27, October 17, 18, November 28, 29 and January 15 to 22. This was more parliamentary debate than in the U.S., Britain, France and Australia combined. As well, the Secretary of State Joe Clark and the Minister of National Defence Bill McKnight appeared on three occasions for a total of more than seven hours before the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade.

In the end, Canada decided to support the UN resolution and to shoulder the burden along with its coalition partners because it was the right thing to do. Here is how former Prime Minister John Turner put it on January 16:

This Parliament and our country, Canada, are faced with a clear choice. We can continue to stand behind the United Nations and its resolutions for which we voted and which told Iraq what it must do to avoid war.

We can remain an integral part of the most determined demonstration of collective political will ever marshalled by the United Nations to stand up against aggression. In my view it is the choice which all our history and the long tradition of Canada's support for the United Nations oblige us to make today.

To do otherwise would repudiate the votes we have unflinchingly cast in support of the United Nations resolutions. It would also repudiate our commitment to internationalism and to the United Nations, the hallmarks of the Liberal Party and Canada's foreign policy for decades.

At the very moment when the United Nations has moved itself to take a strong, unambiguous and collective stand against a brutal aggressor, Canada should not break solidarity with the nations that are standing united against Iraq. . . .

This is a crucial test for that international organization. This is a crucial test for the United Nations, and Canada must support it. This is a crucial test for collective security, and Canada must support it.

In speaking to Parliament on January 15 the Prime Minister put matters as follows:

The fundamental truth in this debate is that if we want peace we must defend these principles which are enshrined in the UN Charter. We must be prepared to stand up for what's right. To do otherwise is to