

I am pleased to have the opportunity to appear before the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade to provide information on the sanctions imposed on Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait. As I mentioned in the House, I am also prepared to arrange further briefings, on a strictly confidential basis, to provide elected Members of Parliament with information whose publication might aid those who would break sanctions, or violate Canadian laws respecting privacy. However, I wish to assure members that nothing of this nature which we have seen contradicts or, for that matter, adds substantially to the picture that I will outline for you today.

Sanctions are one part of a concerted world policy, working through the United Nations, to cause Iraq to withdraw peacefully from Kuwait. Other measures include the presence in the Gulf of military forces from 29 countries, and Security Council Resolution 678, adopted a week ago today, which combines the authorization of force with what Mr. Gorbachev calls "a pause of goodwill," to allow time and incentive for a peaceful solution. In addition, several countries including Canada are pursuing initiatives to resolve this crisis peacefully, and to prepare for the challenges of the post-crisis.

Different elements of this concerted policy support one another. For example, one important reason sanctions work against Iraq is because the naval blockade allows enforcement. As of December 3, Canadian ships alone had intercepted 1,085 vessels in the Gulf and boarded nine to help maintain the naval embargo. As members of this Committee know, sanctions are notoriously hard to have respected, and, so far, the Iraq embargo has been one of the most successful the world has known. But all our evidence is that it has been more successful on the outside than it has been on the inside. Other nations respect the UN sanctions, but Iraq has diverted the effects of sanctions away from its military capacity and political leaders. There is no evidence that sanctions are persuading Iraq to comply with the Security Council resolutions and withdraw from Kuwait.

The question now is whether the combination of sanctions, plus the authorization of force, plus the pause of goodwill, can lead together to a peaceful solution. We believe that combination offers the best prospect for a peaceful withdrawal from Kuwait.

To save the time of the Committee, I will circulate, but not read, information available to Canada, and which we believe to be reliable, respecting the effect of sanctions on particular sectors of the Iraqi economy and society. Before that, let me summarize the actions taken by Canada and the world, and then deal with the question as to whether we should wait for sanctions to force Saddam Hussein to change.