

WAR AND PEACE:

CANADA AND THE GULF CRISIS



Vic Johnson / DND

The liberation of Kuwait opened a new chapter in world affairs, as member states of the United Nations joined together to enforce the rule of international law. Canada has long supported the United Nations (UN), and the crisis in the Persian Gulf has added new meaning to both the principles and the power of that institution.

During the Gulf crisis, Canada was active on the diplomatic, economic and military fronts, helping to organize the UN embargo, providing assistance to those people and countries most severely harmed by the Iraqi aggression, and dispatching military personnel and equipment to the Persian Gulf.

In the days and weeks that followed the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Canada insisted on

the central role of the UN in resolving the crisis. In particular, this country urged the United States to direct its efforts through the UN, rather than respond unilaterally. Canada also held strongly to the position that military confrontation could take place only after every possibility for a peaceful resolution had been explored.

During the last six months of 1990, Canada was in a key position to observe and influence events, serving on the Security Council and participating in the intensive diplomatic campaign to secure a peaceful withdrawal. Canada co-sponsored virtually all the Security Council resolutions respecting Kuwait.

Immediate and practical action was also taken to assist those innocent people who suffered

from the invasion of Kuwait. In August, the Canadian government quickly announced a \$75-million fund for humanitarian assistance to countries in the region, notably Jordan and Egypt. Canada also contributed military personnel and equipment to the coalition forces in the Persian Gulf: three ships, 26 fighter aircraft, 2500 men and women.

The Search for Peace

The world was witness to the intensity and sincerity of the search for a peaceful and just resolution of the Gulf crisis. There was never any question about the absolute necessity for an Iraqi withdrawal. The application and rigid enforcement of sanctions and the build-up of massive military

Canada's *Terra Nova*, *Protecteur* and *Athabaskan* in the Gulf.

force in the Gulf were accompanied by diplomatic proposals and initiatives from many countries, aimed at averting recourse to military force.

Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney proposed elements for a settlement, which the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, took to Baghdad. The elements included the identification of a process for settling Iraq's dispute with Kuwait; the guarantee of all borders, including Iraq's; an undertaking to settle the other problems of the Middle East; and, above all, a complete Iraqi withdrawal.