

News Release

Minister for
International
Trade



Communiqué

Ministre du
Commerce
extérieur

91/07

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

NOTES FOR A SPEECH BY

THE MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE,

JOHN C. CROSBIE,

TO THE ST. JOHN'S BOARD OF TRADE,

ON THE PERSIAN GULF CONFLICT

ST. JOHN'S, Newfoundland
January 31, 1991

Affaires extérieures et
Commerce extérieur Canada

External Affairs and
International Trade Canada

Canada

War is sometimes a necessary evil. That lesson was learned in the 1930s and 1940s. Aggression by Japan in Manchuria went undeterred in 1931, aggression by Italy in Ethiopia went undeterred in 1935, aggression by Germany in Czechoslovakia went undeterred in 1938. Failure of the international community to respond effectively to these acts of aggression led to the Second World War.

The failure to deter aggression in the 1930s was, more than anything else, a failure in the system of collective security established under the League of Nations after the First World War. The protection that individual states were to receive from all other states through the League of Nations failed to materialize. The system of collective security collapsed and with it the prospects for international peace and security.

Here is what Lester Pearson wrote in his memoirs about the maintenance of collective security:

For collective security to have real meaning for peace, all members must be prepared and willing to join in precisely the kind of action, economic and military, which is necessary to prevent or defeat aggression. Otherwise, an aggressor has nothing to fear from the international community but pinpricks.

With the end of the Second World War, persons of vision like Lester Pearson undertook to create a new international organization to succeed where the League of Nations had failed. As Mr. Pearson wrote in 1945, the architects of the United Nations were determined,

to make certain that never again should an aggressor be permitted to strike down one nation after another before the peace-loving nations of the world organize and take concerted action against it.

This fundamental purpose of the United Nations is proclaimed in Article 1 of the UN Charter,

to maintain international peace and security [by taking] effective, collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace.

Sadly, the Cold War so divided nations, especially those on the Security Council, that the UN's role in maintaining collective security has been very largely unfulfilled.

But the end of the Cold War has made possible a reaffirmation of the UN's intended role in achieving collective security. The conflict in the Gulf of Persia will determine whether the UN

system for collective security will succeed or whether, like the League of Nations in the 1930s, it will fail.

This peacemaking role -- deterring aggression or reversing it where deterrence has failed -- is different from the peacekeeping role -- which involves things like supervising truces. The peacekeeping role was invented by Lester Pearson in 1956 largely because the UN had been unable to carry out its original peacemaking role.

Over the years, peacekeeping has achieved a recognized purpose, to help pick up the pieces once conflict is over. Canada has fulfilled this role with honour and will do so in future, including possibly in the Gulf area. But in the absence of a withdrawal by Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait, it is in the peacemaking role, rather than the peacekeeping role, that Canada's support of the United Nations is needed today.

To explain, let me go back to how the current Gulf conflict came about. It arose not on January 16, but on August 2 when Saddam Hussein's armies invaded Kuwait. The UN's role began on the same day, when the Security Council adopted its first resolution on the conflict. That resolution affirmed that the Iraqi invasion was a breach of international peace and security, and demanded that Saddam Hussein immediately and unconditionally withdraw his forces from Kuwait.

Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, fearing they would be Saddam Hussein's next targets for aggression, called on the U.S. and other states for assistance. By swift and resolute action, the coalition probably stopped further aggression by Saddam Hussein against Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states.

But preventing further aggression was not enough. If collective security under the UN was to have any meaning, Saddam Hussein would have to withdraw from Kuwait. Therefore, on August 6, the Security Council approved a resolution imposing economic sanctions on Iraq and occupied Kuwait.

Subsequently, the Security Council adopted 10 more resolutions including: rejecting Iraq's annexation of Kuwait, demanding release of hostages, condemning Iraqi violations of diplomatic immunity, providing relief for nations experiencing economic problems in implementing sanctions, extending the embargo to air traffic, demanding that Iraq stop deporting Kuwaitis, and reaffirming Iraq's liability for damages caused by its invasion of Kuwait.

Throughout this time, a coalition of international forces was assembling in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. These coalition forces were to deter any further aggression by Iraq's armies, to

enforce UN economic sanctions and to provide tangible proof to Saddam Hussein that his occupation of Kuwait must end.

As well, a wide range of diplomatic efforts sought a basis for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. These diplomatic efforts involved, among others, the United Nations, the Arab League, the Non-Aligned Movement, Arab and other Muslim leaders, and representatives of the five permanent Security Council members, the U.S., France, Britain, the Soviet Union and China. Through these contacts all avenues to peace were explored.

On November 29, the Security Council adopted Resolution 678. This resolution made clear to Saddam Hussein that he must withdraw by January 15 or thereafter face the use of force to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The November 29 resolution gave Saddam Hussein a 48-day "pause for peace." He responded to that UN resolution, as to all the others, by completely rejecting it and continuing to prepare for war.

Every step of the way, Canada has played an active role in seeking a diplomatic solution through the United Nations. For example, when the Prime Minister met President Bush in Kennebunkport last summer, some leading Americans were counselling President Bush immediately to launch a limited attack, a so-called surgical strike. The Prime Minister opposed this and encouraged President Bush to seek a resolution through the UN, through peaceful means if possible.

And, before UN Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar went to Baghdad in January, Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark met him in New York to put forward a four-point proposal for peace on behalf of the Prime Minister:

- i) an international guarantee from attack of all borders in the Gulf area;
- ii) a process to settle Iraq's differences with Kuwait, for example over oil revenues;
- iii) creation of a peacekeeping force as part of a broader security system for the region; and
- iv) a follow-on process to address other issues in the Middle East.

But, Saddam Hussein's answer to the UN Secretary-General was unchanged. He would not withdraw from Kuwait.

On January 16, with the expiry of the deadline in UN Resolution 678, the coalition forces initiated the liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi occupation. Should the coalition have waited longer and

given sanctions more time? This is a serious question, but there are compelling answers why force had to be used when it was.

Since the passage of the initial UN resolution on August 2, Saddam Hussein used the intervening 168 days to:

- build up a massive military presence in Kuwait, up from 160,000 troops and 1,400 tanks in September to more than 550,000 troops and 3,500 tanks now;
- construct extensive defensive positions in Kuwait -- making it more and more difficult to dislodge his army as it added daily to a system of huge earthworks, reinforced concrete fortifications, incendiary trenches for burning oil, road and communications networks for reinforcement and the placement of up to half a million land mines along the border with Saudi Arabia;
- expand his offensive capacity through the construction of additional SCUD missile launchers;
- work feverishly to perfect his ability to deliver chemical weapons via missiles to places like Israel -- did we want to wait while Saddam Hussein developed the means to rain terror on his neighbours, Arabs and Israelis alike, in chemical missile attacks?
- create the capacity to dump hundreds of thousands of barrels of oil per day into the sea as a form of environmental terrorism -- did we want more such pipelines built?
- mine the Kuwaiti oil fields to blow them up as required -- some were already burning.

There is no doubt that Saddam Hussein's continuing objectives have been to make the effort to dislodge him as costly as possible, while improving an offensive capacity to strike out at Israel and other neighbours with weapons of mass destruction. Those who argued for more time were unwittingly playing into this strategy.

We saw no diminution of Iraq's military capabilities as a result of sanctions. Iraq continued to give top priority to the military for food, petroleum, spare parts and personnel. Industries producing goods for the military did not experience, and were not likely to experience, significant slowdowns soon. Strategic imports, such as chemical additives, lubricants, water purification chemicals and spare parts were reaching Iraq undetected. They were needed in relatively small volumes, and could be transported by air, overland (by truck or pack animal), or by small boats capable of eluding naval interdiction.

In spite of the decline in living standards suffered since sanctions were imposed, there had been no public demonstrations of discontent nor evidence that the Iraqi regime would respond to pressure from the public to change its policies. Even if it could be done, would we wish to starve the people of Iraq and occupied Kuwait in the hope of influencing Saddam Hussein?

Those are the reasons why the coalition made the right decision on January 16 to use force, rather than waiting longer and simply hoping that Saddam Hussein would withdraw from Kuwait. I want to emphasize here that the deadline for the use of force was not an American decision, it was a UN decision. And the action taken on January 16 was not merely by American armed forces, but rather action by a coalition of 29 states contributing militarily to multinational operations in the Gulf.

The members of the coalition are Australia, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Kuwait, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Spain, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Canada was not compelled to act with the other 28 members of the multinational coalition in using force on January 16. Canada had a choice. We could have decided, as Mr. Chretien suggested on January 15, that "our troops should be called back, not be there if there is a war." We could have decided, as Mrs. McLaughlin suggested on January 15, to "not support UN Security Council Resolution 678 which imposed the January 15 deadline for Iraqi withdrawal and which authorizes the use of force after this date."

We did neither of these because wishful thinking that evil will go away if we want it to badly enough cannot be the basis for serious decision-making. Instead, we said "yes" to the necessary evil of Canada's standing with its 28 coalition partners in the use of force on January 16. We believe it is necessary to press the campaign and not have, as some have suggested, a pause in the conflict.

Saddam Hussein continues to show contempt for the United Nations by his occupation of Kuwait. He continues to use weapons of terror against Israel and others. He continues his unconscionable brutality by using prisoners of war as human shields. And he would use a pause to strengthen his military position in occupied Kuwait. The only pause he should get is when he demonstrates unequivocally that he is withdrawing totally from Kuwait.

On January 22, by a vote of 217 to 47, the House of Commons expressed its support for Canada's role in the Gulf conflict.

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

signal to Saddam Hussein and to other potential aggressors that the UN is incapable of responding effectively to aggression. No moral superiority accrues to those who stand on the sidelines and let others defend their principles. Canada is a peaceful country -- but Canada is not a neutral country, nor a country that expects a free ride.

Canadian forces are playing an important role in the Gulf conflict, albeit one that is more modest than countries like the U.S., Britain or France. Commodore Ken Summers is the Commander of Canadian Forces in the Middle East. He is based, along with the Canadian Joint Headquarters, in Manamah, Bahrain. Commodore Summers reports directly to the Chief of the Defence Staff, General de Chastelain, in Ottawa. Canadian Forces are at all times under direct Canadian command.

The Canadian Air Task Group, based in Doha, Qatar is commanded by Colonel Lalonde. Its operations are co-ordinated through Canadian staff at the Multinational Headquarters in Riyadh. Canadian aircraft are now flying both air patrol over our vessels in the Persian Gulf and sweep and escort for aircraft of the multinational force conducting missions over Iraq and occupied Kuwait. Security for the Canadian Air Task Group is provided by 100 soldiers from the well-known Van Doos regiment.

The Canadian Task Group (naval) is commanded by Captain Dusty Miller. Our ships are now participating in a Logistics Force which provides escort and resupply for combat naval forces in the Gulf. The destroyers Terra Nova and Athabaskan act as escorts, while the supply ship Protecteur is on refuelling/resupply duty. Captain Miller has Tactical Control of all ships in the Logistics Force, comprising 24 ships from 11 countries. There are more than 200 Newfoundlanders serving on Canadian ships in the Gulf.

As well, Canada is in the process of sending a field hospital to be attached to a U.K. medical facility in Saudi Arabia. The field hospital will involve about 550 people, including a security battalion to protect the hospital.

Turning back Saddam Hussein's aggression in Kuwait will not be quick or easy. But that only adds to the importance that we attach, when that task is achieved, of securing peace and security in the Middle East for the long term.

We believe the proposal we put to UN Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar before January 15 could be helpful in building a stable peace after the current conflict. And we believe that the arms race in the Middle East, especially the spread of weapons of mass destruction, must be brought under control.

But, most important for the prospects for peace and security in the region and the world will be the strong reaffirmation of the United Nations that will be achieved by the actions of the multinational forces in liberating Kuwait. In maintaining our unity of purpose now, the problems of this region can be addressed by a United Nations that has successfully stood the test of an important crisis, whereas if our unity of purpose were to fail, those problems would fester in the face of a discredited United Nations.

Our goal today is the same as it was before January 16, and it will be the same when Saddam Hussein's army finally withdraws from Kuwait. That goal is to make the system of collective security under the UN work and thereby to secure the rule of law and uphold the universal values for which the United Nations was created. For Canada and its coalition partners, that is what the conflict in the Gulf is about.