

STATEMENTS
AND
SPEECHES



DÉCLARATIONS
ET
DISCOURS

91/1

Notes for a speech by
the Right Honourable Joe Clark,
Secretary of State for External Affairs,
at a meeting of the
Standing Senate Committee on National Finance

Ottawa, Ontario
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One hundred and sixty-six days ago, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. He did so without justifiable provocation. He did so brutally and totally. That was when war began. Today Kuwait remains occupied. It has been plundered; more than half its population has been forced to flee; Amnesty International has documented shocking violations of human rights. Saddam Hussein has declared Kuwait to be irrevocably a part of Iraq. A sovereign member of the United Nations is being extinguished.

In these 166 days that have passed, the world community has expressed itself with unprecedented consensus and clarity. Twelve resolutions have been passed by the United Nations Security Council, most of them unanimously, condemning Iraq's actions, demanding that Iraq withdraw from Kuwait and imposing sanctions designed to force Iraqi compliance. On November 29, 47 days ago, the UN Security Council gave Saddam Hussein a period during which diplomacy could be given a further chance, a period during which Iraq might be convinced that the world was not bluffing, but a period with an end to it, after which the resort to force would be authorized. That resolution was clear. It stated that this time was designed to "allow Iraq one final opportunity, as a pause of goodwill."

And today, UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar has returned from Iraq, disheartened, believing there is virtually no hope for a diplomatic solution to the crisis. European Foreign Ministers, acting on the Secretary-General's advice, have decided not to send a delegation to Baghdad.

During these past 47 days, diplomacy has been applied to a degree rarely seen before. Canada has been very active in that process. After Security Council Resolution 678, Iraq has every reason to know that the world is not bluffing. Iraq knows now -- if it did not know before -- of the force of opinion and the force of arms arrayed against it. But Iraq remains in Kuwait.

And so, we are at an impasse and approaching a turning point. Peace still has a chance. But where once peace might have been an expectation, it is now only a hope, and that hope grows dim, with every door Saddam Hussein slams shut.

So Canada, and the world, must face the fact that Iraq may force a conflict. There are no good wars. War is mankind's least noble invention. Everyone wants to avoid it. At this sombre moment, we owe it to Canadians to determine as best we can if the course we are embarked upon is correct, and if there are responsible realistic alternatives.

And so I want to outline to you today our assessment of what is at stake and just as importantly what is not. Let me deal briefly with what this crisis is not about.

This crisis is not about the defence of democracy. Kuwait has been a semi-feudal state, although it was moving towards democracy. But this is no argument for inaction. The principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations are universal in their application. Protection against aggression can never be a privilege of those people lucky enough to live in democracies.

And this crisis is not about oil. Certainly, oil was a factor in Saddam Hussein's calculus of aggression. That aggression has had an impact on oil prices, positively devastating for developing countries and the new democracies of Eastern Europe. And, if Iraq withdraws from Kuwait, negotiations between those two countries over oil may follow. Finally, the prospect of 40 per cent of the world's oil being in the hands of Saddam Hussein could give comfort to no one. So oil is a factor but it is not a principle. The United Nations did not become so mobilized for the sake of a few cents a litre on the price of gasoline.

And -- to deal with that most durable Canadian myth -- this crisis is not about supporting Washington. This is Iraq versus the world. That is why the forces arrayed against Iraq are from Senegal and Bangladesh and Czechoslovakia and Argentina and Australia and Bulgaria and 22 other countries. That is why sanctions are being respected with such extraordinary determination. If this is not global consensus, what is? To say that all these countries -- East and West, North and South, Arab and non-Arab, Muslim and non-Muslim -- have arrived at their positions at the behest of Washington is to display a paranoia verging on the pathological.

So this crisis is not about oil, or defending democracy or dancing to tunes written elsewhere. What, then, is it about?

The principle at issue is simple and straightforward: the defence and construction of an international order where aggression is rejected. That principle has been at the heart of our policy from the beginning.

Forty-six years ago the nations of the world formed an organization -- the United Nations -- whose primary purpose was to be the maintenance of international peace and security. The designers of that organization were determined to prevent what they had just experienced -- two World Wars in barely two decades, conflicts of such dimensions and destruction that they resolved never to allow them to happen again. These men and women were not idealists. They were realists, worn by war, steeped in suffering. They had seen the futility of rules without a capacity to enforce them. They knew that as in societies everywhere, rules will only be obeyed if they are enforced and that if they are not enforced, rules become

meaningless and societies themselves cease to be peaceful for anyone. And so, with the sorry history of the League of Nations behind them, with the awful consequences of appeasement to guide them, they crafted a Charter which would give the world the right and the capacity to deter aggression and to reverse it, by force if necessary, when it occurred.

Those purposes permeate the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. But those purposes went unfulfilled for decades because a new war intervened -- the Cold War -- a conflict which turned the UN into a mere shadow of its intended force. And so we had wars -- dozens of them -- which went undeterred and unpunished. Conflicts which flourished because the UN was frozen.

That Cold War is over. And with the end of that war, old excuses have disappeared and new opportunities have emerged. An opportunity now exists to make the United Nations united not simply in name but in fact.

That has been our accomplishment thus far. The Security Council of the United Nations has worked as its architects had intended. The Charter of the United Nations has been acted upon. The process of seeking adherence to resolutions has been followed.

And so, we are approaching the moment where our words may have to become deeds. It is a difficult moment. It would be easy now to back away, to act not as we have resolved but rather to retreat from our principles and our promises. After all, some say, it is only Kuwait, a small country. Or, some say, let us retreat part way and create a new deadline, perhaps months from now. Or, some say, let us go halfway and give Mr. Hussein some of what he says he wants. After all, some say, no principle, no law or Charter or United Nations are worth the risk of war.

These are troubling arguments because they appeal to our natural desire to avoid bloodshed and war. But to those who would have us appease, there are other troubling arguments, worrisome questions.

Of what value would the United Nations be if we now said we were not serious? After 12 resolutions -- clear and unequivocal -- do we say that, after all, we were just bluffing? Do we say to future aggressors that all they need do is hunker down and wait us out, that we are hollow in our principles and words? Does Canada, not a great power in the scheme of things, say that Kuwait, also not a great power, is expendable? Do we say there are rewards for the ruthless, prizes for the powerful? Do we attempt to justify a wrong by saying that we accepted wrongs in the past and did not act then? Do we say we can do no

better than we have done, that the future will be as the past, scarred by sacrifice, wedded to war?

If we as Canadians say these things, we are contemplating the destruction of the United Nations and the international order it now has the chance to build. If we as Canadians say these things, we are betraying the efforts of Louis Saint-Laurent, of Lester Pearson, men who had seen war, leaders and statesmen in times when 100,000 Canadians had died fighting wars which were undeterred, wars whose origins lay in the unwillingness of the world to enforce the rules which all claimed universal.

Perhaps some Canadians are more comfortable with a United Nations that talks, not a United Nations that acts. Perhaps some see it as a place for soapboxes and UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) boxes, not a place where the world comes together to take the hard decisions which peace requires.

It is said we have not waited long enough, that perhaps the message has not gotten through. Saddam Hussein has had 166 days to contemplate the consequences of his actions. Saddam Hussein knows what he is up against. Mr. Aziz said that in Geneva last week.

If we were to make January 15 a mobile date and extend it to February 15 this year or perhaps February 15 next year, by what form of logic could it be argued that Saddam would treat our resolve more seriously than he does now?

What about sanctions and giving them more time to work? That is an issue this Government has given serious consideration. There is no doubt that if the international consensus held, the Iraqi economy might be in ruins if we waited six months or a year. But that is not the end of the argument. There is every indication from the words and deeds of Saddam Hussein that thousands of Iraqis -- men and women and children -- and thousands of those Kuwaitis we seek to liberate, would be made to starve before Saddam would allow his army to suffer. In that regime of terror, we cannot rely on popular discontent to dissuade a dictator. And during a period of further delay, the plunder of Kuwait would continue, and we could find ourselves trying to free a society which has ceased to exist. Finally, in the tinderbox that is the Gulf and the Middle East, crisis and miscalculation and terror would threaten every day as the world waited for an outcome which was by no means assured.

Rather than delay, some say deal. Give Saddam what he wants now to get him out. Let him claim other victories to justify his aggression. But that would be a reward for aggression, an invitation to other conflicts, other tyrants. It would be absurd to give a bank robber the money he has stolen or

to take that money back and give him gold in return. Law and order would crumble if societies worked that way. It is no different internationally.

Canada, along with its friends and allies, has rejected any linkage that could be called a reward. Of course, there is a difference between a linkage and a consequence. And it has not prejudiced our purpose to offer Hussein assurances that we will not proceed beyond the terms set out by the United Nations.

So it is proper and reasonable to assure Saddam, as the Prime Minister has said, that he will not "be chased down the streets of Baghdad." It is proper and reasonable to assure Saddam that his grievances with Kuwait can be discussed in international fora which exist or could be created, the fora which he ignored in choosing aggression. It is proper to contemplate a peacekeeping force, a force which Canada would support and contribute to if asked.

And it is proper and reasonable to state, as the Security Council already has, that a conference dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict is appropriate and necessary in the future. Canada has repeatedly stated -- long before Saddam invaded Kuwait and discovered the Palestinian issue as a scapegoat -- that a Middle East peace conference was welcome if properly structured, to facilitate negotiations between the parties directly concerned. Canada has always favoured a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement based on Resolutions 242 and 338. The invasion of Kuwait, together with the worrisome lack of progress towards a settlement, make peace in the Middle East more necessary than ever, if only to stop Hussein or others from using that excuse to legitimize oppression and sow discord. The consensus which exists today at the UN may allow us to address those urgent problems. If that consensus fails, and Iraq continues its occupation, those problems will be even more difficult to deal with than they are today.

That is not linkage. That is a consequence just as another consequence must be a concerted effort to manage the proliferation and accumulation of weapons throughout the Middle East region, weapons which helped give Hussein the confidence to invade.

I want to conclude by returning to the fundamental principle at issue here: the defence and construction of a durable structure of international order. That is not a foreign cause or a fake cause. That is a Canadian cause. That is a cause worth defending. We are not a great power. We cannot impose order or ignore it. We have no choice but to build it with others -- co-operatively.

And we require that order. We need a co-operative order in trade for our prosperity. We need a co-operative order in security since we cannot provide it ourselves on this huge territory in an age of nuclear weapons. Canadians need co-operative order because its absence would mean the power of the strongest always wins.

And to build that order, we must work with others. It is not an accident that Lester Pearson and others were so active in drafting the Charter of the United Nations and helping make it work. It is not an accident that Canada has been such a strong proponent of a reformed NATO, a new GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), a strengthened CSCE (Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe), an active Commonwealth, a more effective OAS (Organization of American States), a vital La Francophonie and an expanded structure of dialogue with the Asia-Pacific region.

And no other country in the world has been more active and persistent and generous in supporting the development of a United Nations system which works.

If the Persian Gulf situation is not resolved in the way the United Nations has demanded, if Saddam Hussein is allowed to keep the spoils of his conquest, then Canadians must accept a United Nations which will fail in the future, a United Nations which will be unable to deter or turn back future aggression, an organization seriously weakened in its ability to help develop countries or feed starving children or clean up the environment. The world has just begun to treat the United Nations seriously. This is not the time to stop.

In the Persian Gulf, the world has returned to the United Nations. It is not departing from the Charter. It is returning to it. And this is not contrary to peacekeeping. Peacekeeping was invented because the UN did not work, because the great powers did not want it to make peace, only to supervise truces. Those who invented peacekeeping -- Lester Pearson included -- lamented the inability of the world community to make peace. What the Gulf is about is returning to the principle that the best guarantee of peace is the guarantee that aggression will not be accepted.

The United States has returned to the United Nations. So too has the Soviet Union. And in so doing, national purposes have been modified, compromises have been made and consensus has been built. What possible incentive would any great power have in returning to that organization in the future, in making compromises, in seeking consensus, if now, after all this, one of the most naked acts of aggression in 50 years is allowed to succeed?

And what possible Canadian interests does it serve to have unilateral action rewarded -- whether by Saddam Hussein or other aggressors or others who would respond to aggression?

I do not want to overstate the case. If there is war in the Gulf, it will not be the war to end all wars. But I do not want to understate the case either. There will be no hope to deter aggression, no hope to reverse aggression, no hope to keep peace or to make it co-operatively, if the world fails the UN here.

On June 24, 1955, on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the United Nations, Lester Pearson went to San Francisco where the UN was founded and he made a speech. In that speech he noted the positive, though limited, accomplishments of the United Nations despite the constraints of the Cold War. But he stated the following:

"... the Charter has given us all, great or small, a set of standards of international conduct which it is our duty to follow. ... This week we renew, inwards, our determination to live up to those principles -- above all, to rid mankind of the scourge of war. But, if we are to succeed where all previous generations have failed, words alone will be of little avail. It is not enough merely to set up an efficient international organization and lay down an ideal code of conduct ... It is not enough to hoist the United Nations flag bearing the map of the world ... It is not enough to meet one another in the Assembly ... It is not enough to accumulate more knowledge about each other ... It is the ... application of high principles to individual and collective practice that matters."

Peace has a price. Order is not automatic. Security must be secured. Lester Pearson knew that.

There are, I believe, only two choices before us. The first is to defend our principles and in so doing serve our abiding interests in building an international order which works. The second choice is to avoid conflict at all costs and in so doing to secure a peace which is temporary, a peace which will not endure, a peace purchased at the price of rewarding war.

Let this generation and these United Nations make the right choice, a difficult choice, but one which future generations will respect, not ridicule.