

Statement

Secretary of
State for
External Affairs



Déclaration

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**NOTES FOR A SPEECH BY
THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOE CLARK,
DURING A HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATE
ON THE GULF CRISIS**

OTTAWA, Ontario

November 28, 1990

Today we are on the eve of an important Security Council vote. I think it right for Parliament to consider the implications of the crisis that prompts this vote. I would like to take this opportunity to set out the thinking of the Government on the issue before us.

This vote comes near the end of Canada's two-year term on the Security Council. It is our fifth such term, a record for non-permanent members.

That is an appropriate record, because no other country, I dare say, has been as loyal a supporter of the ideals of this world organization, in whose founding Canada participated actively and creatively.

When we look for a noble and far-sighted vision for managing world affairs, in what will be a difficult decade and century beyond, we can hardly do better than to draw on the vision of the UN Charter.

The great sadness of our times has been that the Charter was a dead letter for 40 years, because of the paralysis of the Cold War.

The Cold War is over. I was in Moscow the week before last, and I found an extraordinarily different country from the austere monolith I had visited five short years ago. Sadly, their problems are enormous, but they have a country and a leadership and a people with great reserves of strength, and nations like Canada will -- and must -- help them where we can.

The tremors of the Gorbachev reforms have allowed profound change through Eastern and Central Europe that not only helped end the Cold War, but set the stage for the Conference on Security and Co-operation (CSCE) Summit in Paris last week. In some respects, that Summit marked the end of the Second World War.

The Paris Summit -- and there I would like to share with you the words of Vaclav Havel -- playwright, prisoner, President. He said: "Participating in this Summit is the pre-eminent moment in my life" -- because it brought to pass the goals of freedom and comity he had spent all his days pursuing. The Paris Summit should have been an unqualified celebration of the new possibilities before us, of our shared determination to build a new European common home to be secure from Vladivostok to Vienna to Vancouver, as Eduard Shevardnadze has said. It should have been a celebration of the growing willingness to use the United Nations in the way it had been intended, to bring peace and greater security to the world.

But the celebration in Paris was muted. Because we all understand that a terrible breach of faith and of law and of order has happened: an act of war by Iraq, which imposes on the

world community the burden of a great challenge. If new and more hopeful vistas for world peace are at last to open, we, as the United Nations, have to be equal to the challenge which Iraq's invasion of Kuwait represents clearly to all of us.

This challenge goes to the heart of Canadian interests and Canadian diplomacy, not just now, but over 50 years: the building of a workable world organization able to prevent, or if necessary, to reverse the most blatant and dangerous of international offences: which is the acquisition by force of another country's territory and, in this specific case, an effort to extinguish a UN member in its entirety. The challenge has gone even beyond these transgressions of international law, as Iraqi authorities have threatened the use of terrorism, and of chemical weapons, which they have used in the past, with terrible consequences, even against their own people.

That is the evil that countries historically arm themselves against. That is the evil which causes proliferation, which is responsible for an arms race which in large part diverts the resources that should be going to the poor of the world and denies people in developing countries the right to decent lives.

Mr. Speaker, I have just come from the Middle East, that this evil has occurred in the most heavily armed and volatile region in the world only amplifies its gravity.

Mr. Speaker, I have just come from the Middle East. The potential for death and for destruction in the Middle East is very real. Members of this House of Commons should have no illusion about the danger -- nor about our obligation to try to moderate that danger. Most of Israel's neighbours remain in a state of war against her. The Palestinian people, despite the Intefadeh, despite their acceptance of Resolution 242, live in a pressure-cooker of frustration, with thousands of new migrants forced home from the Gulf. There are the larger questions of democracy and decision-making in the Middle East; quarrels between families and regimes who each want to lead the Arab world; shocking gaps in income between opulent wealth and the most shocking poverty, and there are chemical weapons, biological weapons, almost certainly some capacity for nuclear weapons, and the steady flood of conventional arms. And in the midst of all that -- in a region where the institutions of modern government have shallow roots -- there is generally, the common link of the noble religion of Islam which, if it became radicalized, could have devastating consequences around the world. President Gorbachev is aware of that. King Hussein is. Presidents Ozal and Mubarak are. And, of course, Prime Minister Shamir understands the threat of Islamic extremism.

That the Iraqi aggression affects security of access to the most vital of commodities further compels our attention. But

make no mistake about the importance of the principle we intend to defend: the principle of international order, where international law is respected, and the United Nations is used and works.

Canadians, historically, have been at the cutting edge of the practical measures which have won respect for the United Nations. We helped draft the Charter. Professor John Humphrey, of McGill, was a principal author of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Lester Pearson guided the ideal of peacekeeping -- against Canadian critics who said it was an inappropriate use of the UN, and 83,000 Canadians wore, and wear today, the blue beret, with pride and with effect, to build peace and to maintain peace.

Now we are at the new step in the evolution of the United Nations -- a time in which, at last, the members of the Security Council of the United Nations are working together on resolutions which involve enough compromise on all sides to allow this diverse world to act together to keep its house in order, and yet, at the same time, are prepared to come together in compromise resolutions clear in their intent and respected in their application. It is hard to think of a time when the United Nations worked better, and we, Canada, want to keep it working, because that is the only way to advance peace and prevent war.

Since the beginning of the crisis, the United Nations has shown that blatant disrespect for international law can be met with a response that is firm in its resolve and unbending in its respect for international order.

For Canada, some of the basic precepts in which our foreign policy is deeply rooted are being challenged by the Gulf crisis, and they just may be vindicated by its resolution and its aftermath. The rule of law and the establishment of a stable international environment have been key objectives of ours since the end of the Second World War.

Throughout the crisis, this Government has kept its key objectives in constant view:

- to make clear the unacceptability of Iraqi behaviour and Canada's determination to play our part in the collective response;
- to reinforce the rule of law in international affairs and to support a renewed United Nations in its first post-Cold War response to a gross violation of its Charter by a member state;
and
- of course, to protect Canadian lives and Canadian

interests put in jeopardy by the invasion and annexation of Kuwait.

Following from those objectives and in co-operation with other countries active in the international consensus arrayed against Iraq, since the beginning of this crisis we have been trying to ensure:

- that the UN-imposed sanctions are made as effective as possible;
- that the international consensus is sustained;
- that humanitarian and economic problems created by the crisis and the sanctions are addressed quickly and sympathetically, both as an intrinsically important goal and one supportive in sustaining the international consensus;
- that peaceful means to end the dispute are explored, while insisting that such means must be fully consistent with UN resolutions.

Well, Sir, after where are we today? Iraq is still occupying Kuwait, in spite of universal condemnation and the near-universal application of sanctions.

We, of course, hope that sanctions will help to persuade Saddam Hussein to withdraw. We continue to believe that they help make clear our resolve. But we also now recognize that sanctions, in and of themselves, are not sufficient to force a withdrawal, if the Iraqi Government places a higher priority on holding on to its territorial gains than on the resumption of normal life for its citizenry. We simply have to face that fact.

The Government in Baghdad has been using innocent civilians of third countries, including Canada, in its efforts to wrest concessions from the international community and to try to win propaganda points with its own supporters. And it has proceeded at the same time with a ruthless program to annihilate all traces of Kuwait's separate existence. In short, Iraq has repeatedly ignored the demands of the international community in successive Security Council resolutions passed since August 2nd. It has failed to comply with the obligations incumbent upon it on the basis of international law, on the basis of the principles of civilized behaviour, and on the basis of its own membership in the United Nations.

I have, as I said, in the last several days been in the Middle East. This trip followed intensive talks that both the Prime Minister and I had with the leaders of the Soviet Union, the European Community, and the United States. In the Middle

East, I spent many hours in discussion with Iraq's neighbours, including the President of Turkey, the King of Jordan, the Prime Minister of Israel, and with the ministers for foreign affairs of those countries. I also met at length with President Mubarak of Egypt and with his Foreign Minister, Dr. Meguid.

Several weeks ago, I had met with other foreign ministers, from the Gulf area, from Saudi Arabia and Qatar. I set out for all these interlocutors the view of this Government regarding the unacceptability of Iraq's invasion.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to this House today that every head of state, every head of government and every minister with whom we have met have shared that view.

The view in Canada, in the region, and throughout the world is the same. Iraq is isolated. Iraq has behaved abominably. It has invaded a small neighbour, and it has done its utmost to ensure that its restoration will be impossible. It has taken thousands of hostages, including Canadians. This destruction of a small country is "unbelievable" to quote President Mubarak of Egypt, who told me of specific and categorical assurances that had been given to him personally by Iraq's President only days before Iraq unleashed its vast military arsenal against Kuwait.

From the beginning of this crisis we have all hoped that peaceful means would produce the necessary Iraqi compliance with Security Council resolutions. Indeed, Canada has been working strenuously since the beginning of August to seek just such a peaceful solution. We have done so in the United Nations, we have done so in the region, and we have done so in close consultation with all members all around the world of the Security Council. Officials of my Department have been travelling around the world regularly, consulting particularly with members who rarely vote with Canada to try to encourage a unanimity and the consensus that will allow the United Nations to be effective in these circumstances.

I am sure that I speak for all Canadians in hoping that a peaceful solution may still be possible. Time, however, is running out.

Tomorrow at the United Nations in New York, Canada will, as a member of the Security Council, participate in the formal consideration of a new resolution. This new resolution will almost certainly authorize the use of whatever means are necessary to remove Iraq from Kuwait and to restore to Kuwait its own destiny.

For Canada and for others, what is at stake is the integrity of our international order, and the credibility of

international law and our multilateral institutions.

We must recognize, however, as I have seen over the last few days, that the neighbours of Iraq have another interest in ensuring that Iraq's deed is undone.

Mr. Speaker, we in Canada, far from the scene of the battle, far from the immediate site of these terrible tensions, we must realize that there will be no safety, no stability, if Saddam Hussein gets away with his annexation of Kuwait.

All countries would prefer a peaceful solution. Not a "deal," which rewards the aggressor, but full and swift compliance with the Security Council's resolutions.

Regrettably, many believe that a peaceful solution is not attainable whatever their preference.

The leader of Iraq does not seem to grasp the dimensions of the problem he has created. Consequently, he does not seem to understand the strength of the resolve to see justice done. He thinks the world is bluffing.

The purpose of the United Nations resolution, which Canada and other members of the Security Council will consider tomorrow, is to ensure Iraq understands that this is not a bluff.

Tomorrow's resolution will demand full compliance with previous Council resolutions. If Iraq does not fully implement those resolutions, the text will authorize member states co-operating with the Government of Kuwait to use all necessary means to see they are implemented and to restore international peace and security in the area.

Does this mean that force will be used?

That is up to Iraq.

That resolution will probably be approved tomorrow, November 29th. In normal cases, that would mean the capacity to act, with whatever means, would exist tomorrow, November 29th. Now there is a serious and constructive proposal that the resolution build in a pause between the day in November when the authority is vested, and some specific later date on which it might be used. That proposal reflects the call for a pause which Canada and other countries proposed after discussions during the United Nations General Assembly. A deadline which implied an ultimatum could be counterproductive and artificial, and that is not what is proposed. As the Prime Minister said yesterday, what is contemplated is, instead, "a pause of goodwill" to allow Saddam Hussein one more opportunity to reflect on his options.

Naturally, that time must be used by all nations to seek a basis for the peaceful acceptance of Security Council Resolutions. But, in particular, it gives Iraq an opportunity to seek a peaceful end to the war it began when it invaded Kuwait.

In passing, Mr. Speaker, I should say that that proposal for a pause indicates one of the very real benefits of the new atmosphere in the Security Council when countries that had not previously worked together were prepared to work together in these circumstances to ensure that there was a basis on which the world could act together.

We hope Iraq will take this opportunity.

If Iraq does so, will the international community in any case insist on the elimination of its leadership or its entire military capacity?

No. There is a willingness in the region to live with Iraq, warily to be sure, but on a basis of international law and internationally guaranteed frontiers.

Does Iraq have legitimate concerns which should be discussed? Perhaps there are some. That is up to the Government of Kuwait to negotiate or for Iraq to pursue in the many international fora which adjudicate exactly such disputes. The possibility of such a negotiating power is contained in Security Council Resolution 660, the very first passed by the Council in responding to the invasion. We urge Saddam Hussein to pursue this option.

Would military action in the Gulf be an exercise of only Western will? Absolutely not. The coalition includes such partners as Pakistan, Morocco, Czechoslovakia, Argentina, as well as Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf States and dozens of others.

An Arab force could see to the future defence of Kuwait, with international peacekeeping components as necessary or desirable. Canada would certainly consider seriously a request to participate, in the cause of peace.

Will there be further attempts to resolve existing tensions in the Gulf and Middle East regions?

Yes. During my discussions in the Middle East, the Arab-Israeli dispute was also raised, specifically the Palestinian question. I believe that one of the consequences of the current Gulf crisis could be a new sense of urgency about solving other problems facing that troubled region. We have of late witnessed a pattern of successes within the Security Council in addressing regional issues not just in the Middle East, but

also in Cambodia and elsewhere. If we do not lose it here, if we can maintain the strength of the United Nations which we have so carefully built over the last years, and particularly the last months, if that pattern continues, then a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli dispute, which Canada views as necessary and urgent, may at last be possible. This is a matter that can only be addressed, however, separately from the current crisis.

Iraq's offence is sui generis and its undoing, according to the highest principles of international law and the highest interests of international security, is essential. But resolution of all territorial disputes in the region on a just and equitable basis is urgently required, if peace and security are to apply in a durable way in a region which may be the most volatile in the world. We will also have to turn our collective attention to the need for arms control measures which deal with weapons of mass destruction that threaten the whole region. Sustaining the new unity of the international community is the only hope, the best hope, that these problems can be resolved with speed.

There may be the elements of a peaceful resolution of this crisis. I was more encouraged than I thought I might be by the conversations I had in the Middle East. I was encouraged by the determination of people ranging from Israeli leaders to King Hussein, to the Palestinians to look for ways in which this experience may lead to constructive response to other issues so we hope that there will be means found to resolve this issue.

Otherwise, force will have been authorized by the world community, and on behalf of the international institutions Canada has spent five decades to design and defend.

To abandon those institutions now, to abandon the unanimity and the consensus that has been found in the United Nations now would be to abandon all hope for the rule of law in world affairs. The world agrees with that. The question is: "Will Iraq agree with that?"

The resolution we will be voting on tomorrow in New York is the desirable option that I have sought, and many here have sought: the UN authority to use force if Iraq rejects the option of a peaceful withdrawal.

The House will remember and no one in our country will forget that the use of force began on August 2nd. It is now up to Saddam Hussein to determine whether the international community will have to use the authority of the United Nations to achieve our collective goals through further force.