

STATEMENTS
AND
SPEECHES



DÉCLARATIONS
ET
DISCOURS

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Notes for a speech
in the House of Commons by
the Right Honourable Joe Clark,
Secretary of State for External Affairs,
on the situation in the Persian Gulf

Ottawa, Ontario

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Affaires extérieures et
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Canada

I want to congratulate the leader of the New Democratic Party on the serious and thoughtful nature of her remarks. She clearly was attempting to be constructive, and set forth, in some very general terms, other options which she thinks should be explored.

She made the point that this is an extraordinary time. It is, and that requires all of us to do everything we can to bring forward the best practical advice we can.

The Honourable Member and I may argue about what "realism" means, but I think she would agree that the Government, and the world, require much more precision as to other options than she was able to provide today and we look forward to receiving that later.

The new Leader of the Opposition made essentially four points.

He wants to wait for sanctions to have an effect, yet he gives this House no idea as to how long he proposes to wait; and he gives this House not one iota of evidence that the sanctions program we have mounted will affect Iraqi political leadership or military capacity. I want to return to the question of sanctions, but hope that other spokespersons of the Liberal Party will be far more precise in indicating exactly how long they want to wait.

Second, he pretends that the use of force in the Gulf would not have the authority of the United Nations. That is absolutely false. Resolution 678, Articles 2 and 3 "authorizes Member States co-operating with the Government of Kuwait, unless Iraq on or before 15 January 1991 fully implements, as set forth in paragraph 1 above, the foregoing resolutions, to use all necessary means to uphold and implement resolutions 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions and to restore international peace and security in the area; requests all States to provide appropriate support for the actions undertaken in pursuance of paragraph 2 of the present resolution."

Third, he proposes to "call back" Canadian troops.

And fourth, he makes the curious and alarming argument that because the United Nations failed in Tibet, failed in Cyprus and failed elsewhere, we should not help the United Nations succeed in Kuwait.

Mr. Speaker, 167 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 167 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, 48 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 if necessary. That resolution was clear. It stated that this time was designed to "allow Iraq one final opportunity, as a pause of goodwill."

And yesterday, UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar 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, decided not to send a delegation to Baghdad.

After Security Council Resolution 678 Iraq has had every reason to know that the world is not bluffing. But Iraq remains in Kuwait.

During these past 48 days, diplomacy has been applied to a degree rarely seen before. The Prime Minister and I have indicated that we wish to describe to this House some of the activities undertaken by Canada during this crisis. I cannot recite them all, for the list is too long and some of them are still under way. But I want to indicate some of the activities this country has been engaged in on behalf of peace.

First, on a bilateral basis, perhaps in one of the most important actions taken in this crisis, the Prime Minister went to Kennebunkport for a meeting with President Bush, a meeting scheduled before Iraq invaded Kuwait. There were senior and respected advisors then counselling the President of the United States to engage in a surgical strike. The Prime Minister told him, on behalf of Canada, that that kind of policy would not be acceptable to this country and should not be followed by the United States. There was no surgical strike. That gave the world an opportunity to pursue diplomacy and a peaceful solution to this crisis.

That was one of several instances when we were able to use the bilateral relationship we have with the United States, a relationship some mock, but a relationship which is an opportunity for substantial influence on a superpower. In this

case, we have used that relationship to encourage the United States to work with the world in trying to resolve this problem.

Second, at the United Nations we have been extremely active from the beginning. Here, when the crisis began, there was a strong inclination on the part of the United States to go it alone, not to operate under the aegis of the UN. Again, Canada said that was wrong, that this crisis was to be handled effectively and with authority, it must be done under the umbrella and with the authority of the United Nations. Others counselled a similar approach. And in the end, the United States took the decision to operate within the UN context. That is why the debate today is not about what one nation might do but about whether this country will support the United Nations in what it has decided to do.

We have also, of course, been extraordinarily active on the floor of the United Nations and in the co-sponsorship of Security Council resolutions, and, more importantly, in drafting those resolutions; in finding ways in which they, and other resolutions could be acceptable to all.

Third, Canada undertook, because of our value as an industrial power with connections to the Third World, a series of initiatives based on the view that Saddam Hussein, if he would listen to anyone, might well be more prepared to listen to other Third World leaders than he would be to listen to the leaders of the developed world.

The Prime Minister met with Mr. Perez de Cuellar in New York when he was there to co-chair the Children's Summit. He then made a proposal based upon the reality that the principal victims of this invasion are not exclusively in Kuwait. They are also the poor of the Third World. They are the poor of Zimbabwe, of Bangladesh, and of other countries who depend more than we do upon secure and relatively cheap supplies of oil. Many of these people are Muslims. Many of these people are people whose cause should appeal directly to Saddam Hussein.

But we understood that those countries themselves could make that case better than we. Our Prime Minister met with President Diouf of Senegal, who is not only the President of the Organization of African Unity, but also the incoming President of the Islamic Conference and the President of La Francophonie. President Diouf, at the behest of Canada, and with some help from Canada, convened meetings of other leaders of the Third World and a mission planned to Iraq. It was in Paris en route to Baghdad to try to make that kind of appeal when Saddam Hussein called and said he would prefer to have that mission deferred, delayed until after the visit of James Baker -- the visit that Saddam Hussein did not allow to happen.

Canada didn't leave it there. President Traoré of Mali was the co-President with Canada of the Children's Summit. After conversations between the Prime Minister of Canada and President Traoré, his Foreign Minister went to Baghdad, tried to see if there could be movement, came back and reported to my colleague, the Associate Minister of National Defence, who was here over Christmas, and senior officials, to see if there was some movement. And, in many other ways, we have been active through the Commonwealth, La Francophonie and other connections in the Third World because we recognized that we had to do everything possible to try to persuade Saddam Hussein to understand how serious this issue was and how serious the resolve of the world is.

Fourth, in terms of peacekeeping, it may be that there will be a need for some peacekeeping presence if we are able to secure a withdrawal of the Iraqi forces. It would be better if that were largely Arab, but clearly there would also be a need for the kind of expertise that Canada is uniquely qualified to provide. That was raised with us by Egyptian leaders; was discussed by my colleague, the Associate Minister, when she was in the region; it was part of the offer made to the United Nations by the Prime Minister in the letter that I delivered the other night.

Fifth, on the question of an Arab solution, which many were seeking during much of the crisis, because they thought that other solutions may not work, Canada adopted an aggressive approach to try to encourage Arab leaders to work, and to work together. That included, in our view, trying to overcome, as a practical matter, the difference that existed between King Hussein of Jordan and other Arab leaders because Hussein and Jordan are of fundamental importance in the region. It would be better if we had those nations working together rather than at cross-purposes.

That involved a number of conversations -- contacts between the Prime Minister and the King, the Prime Minister and President Mubarak, and a number of others. But it also involved the visit I was able to make to the region, and the long conversation with King Hussein during which we discussed explicitly and at length, the question of the hostages and whether it made any sense at all for Saddam Hussein to continue to keep the hostages. I made the case to King Hussein that the taking of hostages made no sense. King Hussein told me that he intended to go again to Baghdad. After that trip, as a result of proposals from him, from Yasser Arafat, and from others, Saddam Hussein made the decision to let all the hostages go.

Sixth, in terms of consultations, we are in regular daily contact with Foreign Ministers and Heads of Government of a range of other countries, 50 or 60, not just the coalition

partners, but others who might have some influence. The Prime Minister, in particular, is in regular contact with President Mubarak; with King Hussein; with President Bush; with Prime Minister Major; with President Mitterrand; with President Gorbachev. In his conversations two days ago with President Mitterrand, there was discussion of the proposals we had put forward to the Secretary-General, proposals that were not then public, and Mitterrand indicated at that time that there was a great deal of similarity in the thinking and the analysis of the French and the Canadian governments.

Those activities, of course, continue, as was indicated during Question Period, as we try to find if there are ways in the hours that remain in this pause for peace that was established to try to encourage Saddam Hussein to respond to someone.

Those things have been done. They have been done by Canada. And they have been done by other countries. There has been an extraordinary attempt to solve this diplomatically.

But today, January 15, 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, with every hour that passes.

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 -- not waiting, not running away, but real alternatives. There have been wars in the past where patriotism has overshadowed logic, where pride has prevented peace, where emotion has overcome reason. We must be as confident as we can be that if this comes to war, it is not one of those wars.

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 men and women who designed that organization 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 -- conflicts which flourished because the UN was frozen.

With the easing of East-West tensions, 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 so far in the response to this crisis. 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 might be easier now to back away, to act not as we have resolved but rather to retreat from our principles and our promises.

To those who would have us back away, there are 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. Perhaps they see it as a place for people with concerns, not convictions.

Mr. Speaker, it is said we have not waited long enough, that perhaps the message has not gotten through. Saddam Hussein has had 167 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 the resolve of the United Nations 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 seriously weakened if we waited six months or a year. But that is not the end of the argument. There is no guarantee whatsoever that economic weakness would get Saddam out of Kuwait. 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.

Mr. Speaker, there is a notion out there that the choice is between a peaceful present -- the status quo -- and a terrible war. That is a dangerous, misleading illusion. There is no peaceful status quo. The Gulf region today -- the entire Middle East -- is incendiary, a time bomb of conflict, extremism and terror. The assassination in Tunis yesterday of Abu Iyad and Abu Al-Hol is an example, as was the terrible violence which occurred at the mosque in East Jerusalem in October, the bombings which led to the death of pilgrims at Mecca in 1987 and 1989, the riots which rocked Jordan in mid-1989 and the civil war in Lebanon. These can become fuses for frightening carnage and chaos. That tension is immeasurably more acute because of Iraq's aggression. As long as Iraq remains in Kuwait, the time bomb ticks and the world is playing Russian roulette with its own future.

And outside that region, devastation and deprivation would continue and accelerate if the world delayed. I am not talking about developed countries like Canada. I am talking about developing countries whose very existence as functioning societies is at stake. Terrible poverty is being made more and more unbearable. Governments in Africa are going broke, lurching towards disintegration. Inflation rates are doubling and tripling, deficits are ballooning, basic human needs are not being met. Governments in Africa have asked Canada if they can convert money meant for education to funds they can use to buy basic goods. Their development as civilized societies is in jeopardy. And in Eastern Europe, the dramatic escalation in oil prices has become the singular reason why the progress they have made thus far -- and the progress that must be made in the future -- is in jeopardy. Czechoslovakian Finance Minister Klaus told me in November that this crisis had gutted their economic reform plan and cost his country billions. Saddam Hussein does not simply destabilize the Gulf. He destabilizes Eastern Europe and Africa and Asia and Latin America.

Rather than delay, some say deal. Let Saddam 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.

At this very moment, plans proposed by France and others are being discussed in New York. Although there are important details to clarify, those plans have positive elements. They are very similar to a proposal put by the Prime Minister to the Secretary-General before he went to Baghdad. That proposal -- a Canadian proposal -- included the following elements:

- an international guarantee of all borders in the Gulf area from attack;
- the initiation of a process to settle Iraq's differences with Kuwait;
- the departure from Saudi Arabia of all forces from outside the region and the creation of a peacekeeping force drawn primarily from the Arab States;
- a firm commitment in principle to a process to resolve other issues in the Middle East.

Those provisions are at the centre of the proposals now being discussed. What is missing now -- what has always been

missing -- is the trigger that would set all this in motion: an Iraqi commitment to, and total withdrawal from, Kuwait. Where is Iraq's response?

Mr. Speaker, we are told there are other ways to get Saddam out. This Government and the world -- for 167 days -- has been trying to find a way to get him out without conflict. If anyone in this House has a plausible plan -- not a dream but a plan -- then this Government and Canadians need to hear it today.

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, Mr. Speaker, 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 have others. 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.

In his memoirs, Lester Pearson records one of the saddest episodes of international diplomacy in the 1930s, an episode which helped sow the seeds of the World War which was to follow. That episode was the consideration, by the League of Nations, of steps to be taken to counter Italy's unprovoked invasion of Ethiopia, another small country. Mr. Pearson, who was a Canadian representative to the League at that time, describes the heady start, the hopeful consensus at the beginning that sanctions should be applied, that Italy's aggression should be reversed.

He then catalogues the steady erosion of that consensus, the collapse of resolve, as government after government became timid, pre-occupied by narrow self-interest. What was to be the salvation of the League of Nations became its downfall, and the world lurched towards war. He concludes his commentary with the following observations:

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.

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

Mr. Speaker, there are, I believe, only two clear 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.