

Statement

Secretary of
State for
External Affairs



Déclaration

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

NOTES FOR A SPEECH BY

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOE CLARK,

AT A LUNCHEON AT THE CHATEAU LAURIER HOTEL

HOSTED BY THE ROTARY CLUB OF OTTAWA

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A year ago, the world was celebrating its good fortune. There was a strong sense that an historic corner had been turned, that we were on our way to a new period of peace and common purpose. The Berlin Wall was down. Playwrights had become presidents. Democracy was chosen and respected in Nicaragua, and almost everywhere else in Latin America, and throughout Central and Eastern Europe. The Marxists' economic model was virtually everywhere rejected; old divisions were forgotten; old adversaries began to work together.

The world keeps changing and today there is less euphoria.

There is a war in the Persian Gulf.

The independence of the Baltic States, indeed, the very premise of perestroika seems in doubt.

Western faith in progress is haunted by the stark image of the students and the tanks in Tiananmen Square.

In our own country, where we claim such respect for one another, and advertise our tolerance, Muslim children and Jewish children have to go to school with guards -- children have to face the fact of hatred; and the families of military personnel become the targets of crude crank calls.

In fact, the world is much better off than it was when an Iron Curtain divided Europe, and Nelson Mandela was locked in jail and the United Nations could not move itself from talk to action.

But improvement does not mean perfection, and if the last six months have proven anything to Canadians, it is that we cannot change the world by watching or by wishing.

The taunts against Arab kids and Jewish kids are happening right here, in this city, in this country, and the only way to stop them is by the example we demonstrate to our families, our neighbours.

The principle that aggression should be stopped is a Canadian principle, honoured in two World Wars, in Korea, in more peacekeeping missions than any other nation, and in the constant focus of a foreign policy that has sought to build international institutions and enlarge international order from the United Nations to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), to the Commonwealth, to La Francophonie, to international treaties, reaching from the oceans to the ozone.

The power to enforce UN Resolutions, by military means if necessary, is a Canadian concept strongly supported by those Canadians who were architects of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Cold War froze the world into attitudes that were as unhealthy as they were unhelpful. While we lamented the overweening influence of the superpowers, so, too often, did we count upon it. The superpowers aren't so super any more, and that means other countries, other peoples, must accept more responsibility than we were able to before. The easy part of being Foreign Minister of Canada is to give solid Canadian advice to others. The harder responsibility is to decide what Canada is going to do, what price we are prepared to pay.

It is tempting to simply be a humanitarian country that tends to the wounded in any conflict. That says Canada should be a global paramedic, concerned only with the symptoms of conflict, not its causes nor its cures. That also assumes we have no views about the values in conflict; that we do not, for example, distinguish between a victim and an aggressor.

All wars seem depressingly similar. There are the bombs and bullets, the propaganda, the suffering of civilians and soldiers. There is always destruction and seldom construction. It is difficult to draw distinctions in such circumstances. But there are differences, and this conflict in the Gulf reflects profound changes in the international system, changes which form a foundation of hope for the world when war is over.

One difference, one change is the principle for which the Members of the United Nations are now at war. In the past, wars were usually fought for reasons of ideology or ambition or pride. Those were wars which failed to sow the seeds of peace. They were wars fought by nations simply for national interests.

In that context, it is important to distinguish what this war in the Gulf is not about.

For example it is not about oil. Certainly, oil was a factor in Saddam's calculous of aggression. And that aggression had an impact on oil prices, sending developing countries and the new democracies of Eastern Europe into a tailspin. And certainly, the prospect of 40 per cent of the world's oil being in the hands of Saddam Hussein can give comfort to no one. So oil is a factor. But oil is not the principle. The forces of 28 nations from every continent of this planet -- some oil exporters, some oil importers -- are not in the Gulf for the sake of a few cents a litre on the price of gasoline.

Nor is this conflict about the defence of democracy. Kuwait has been a semi-feudal state, although it was beginning to

move towards democracy. Its system of government has not been one we would choose ourselves. But protection against aggression can never be the privilege of those people lucky enough to live in democracies. The Charter of the United Nations is a universal document. It is there to be universally applied. If it were partial, it would be prejudiced.

And this conflict is not about a superpower agenda.

The House of Commons inspires bizarre accusations, and I have received my share of them, and even uttered a few. But one of the strongest exchanges in that House was when an Opposition Member of Parliament called Canada a "lapdog of the superpowers" -- "superpowers" in the plural -- because we supported the Resolutions of the Security Council of the United Nations.

The implication is that, because Canada agreed with Moscow and Washington, and Beijing, and London, and Paris, they were exercising independent judgment, but we were not.

Nor, since most of the Security Council Resolutions were unanimous, was Finland thinking for itself, nor Colombia, nor Zaïre, nor Malaysia, nor the other countries who, with Canada, were Non-permanent Members of the Security Council when these Resolutions were debated and amended; and often after difficult compromise, all around the table, finally adopted.

The logic of these accusations is also that the 28 countries with forces in the Gulf -- the 28 Members of the Coalition -- suspended their judgment too, to fit the lap of the superpowers -- countries like Czechoslovakia, Australia and Argentina.

That is absurd, but it is also dangerous, because it advances a phoney rationale for rejecting the authority of the only body, with global responsibility for peace, whose authority we have spent decades seeking to assure.

The world has too much experience with a UN that would not decide and thus could not act. We had that experience with the Berlin crisis, with the takeover of mainland China, with the Cuban missile crisis, with the Soviet invasions of Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan and the five wars in the Middle East. Tens of thousands of lives were lost and millions of futures blighted because the UN did not work.

Canadians are not used to war. The conflicts the UN was not able to solve did not happen here. We have not fought a war for over four decades. In times of conflict, there are always differing views as to who is right and who is wrong -- differing views which we must respect as an integral part of our

democracy. But the debate should also consider what would happen if the Members of the United Nations did not support the solemn Resolutions of the Security Council.

This is not a war fought for narrow national interests. It is a war fought for global principle. That is a profound change, a profound difference from the past. This conflict is about the principle that unprovoked aggression has ceased to be acceptable as an instrument of national ambition. This conflict is about building an international order where that principle is not simply declared -- and then ignored; but acted upon -- and then secured. This conflict is about making the United Nations the singular instrument of that order. This conflict is not about the war that now rages but the peace that will follow.

Old ideas and old realities die hard. Our old thoughts have not caught up with the new reality. And so, we fail to recognize change and thus deny opportunity.

We see that now in some attitudes about the United Nations. Because we have been used to a UN that talked -- and talked and talked some more -- some find strange a UN that can act. Indeed, some seem to reject a UN that can act. That attitude reflects an old reality which no longer applies. For decades the UN could not act -- and therefore could only talk -- because its members did not believe in the institution they themselves had created after the Second World War. The Cold War crippled the UN and turned what could have been a crucible of peace into a seminar in semantics. It was ignored and enfeebled by great powers who proceeded to conduct themselves as great powers always had -- unilaterally and often by force. In facing aggression, the best the UN could do was to develop the practice of peacekeeping, a practice which did not deter conflict or reverse it but simply picked up the pieces once the bloodshed was over. The UN became an auditor of aggression concluded, not an agency of aggression avoided.

And so some have equated peacekeeping to the UN, as if to say the UN should do no better. They see the UN as a place where people should talk about peace but not make peace, a place for blandishment not accomplishment. But that's not what the Charter says. That's not what the authors of the Charter wanted. They wanted an agency of action, a place where the countries of the world could gather to seek peace and, if that search failed, to make peace. The architects of the UN had had enough of talk; they had had enough of bloodshed which resulted from aggression undeterred; they had had enough of international organizations which had become excuses for inaction.

The end of the Cold War has liberated the UN from the divisions which prejudiced its purpose. We now have a UN that

can act as was intended, a UN which can now be a focus of hope and not a factor of frustration.

That is another change which the Gulf War represents. There are others. One is the unprecedented determination and unity with which the world sought peace before it joined this war. The world did not lurch into conflict. The world gave peace a chance. There has never been a diplomatic effort like it, an effort mounted by countries from North and South, East and West, Arab and non-Arab. That diplomacy was not Western diplomacy. It was global diplomacy. From the beginning, Canada sought to consult with others around the world to find a peaceful way to get Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait.

Canada enjoys a unique standing in the world. We are one of the strong economies of the developed world -- a member of the Economic Summit -- but we are also extremely active and respected in the developing world, with our aid program and our leadership in the Commonwealth and La Francophonie.

We knew that certain messages to Saddam Hussein would be better delivered by developing countries, by Islamic leaders. So, in September, the Prime Minister proposed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations that a small delegation of Third World leaders go to Baghdad to express directly to Saddam the terrible suffering he was causing to the developing world, including Muslim countries. Mr. Mulroney then met, in Ottawa, with President Diouf, of Senegal, a past President of the Organization of African Unity, incoming President of the Islamic Conference, and President of La Francophonie. As a result, President Diouf put together a delegation of Asian and African leaders to go to Iraq -- leaders from Bangladesh, Mali and Nigeria. President Diouf was on his way to Baghdad and stopped over in Paris. My senior official responsible for Africa and the Middle East, Marc Perron, went to Paris to pass on our final views to him.

On December 5, at 4 p.m., Paris time, in the Embassy of Senegal, President Diouf was conferring with Mr. Perron when they were told that Saddam Hussein had cancelled the trip, saying he wished it to take place after the first planned meeting between Foreign Minister Aziz and Secretary Baker. Saddam Hussein did not allow that meeting to happen. And so, the plane that was ready to leave Paris for Baghdad the next day had to return home.

But the Prime Minister did not leave it there. He spoke to President Traore who offered to send his Foreign Minister to Baghdad to see if movement was possible. He then came to Ottawa and reported to us on his mission. That ended up being yet another door which Saddam Hussein slammed shut.

That is but one example of the intense period of diplomacy involving Canada and others to avoid conflict. I had 54 separate meetings with foreign ministers from around the world in an attempt to avert this conflict.

Our efforts were mirrored in the activism of others around the world. That too is a change, a welcome change which demonstrated the profound preference of the world for peace and the profound involvement of the world in that search.

To claim that the war we must now fight is a war of one group or one nation or one narrow interest against another contradicts the facts. Great powers are there, as are lesser powers. Nations from the South, as well as the North. Brown and black are fighting alongside white. The spectrum of faith and nationality is full -- Christian and Muslim, Arab and non-Arab.

Look at the 28-member Coalition in the Gulf. One of those members is the United States. It is bearing much of the burden. It is also bearing much of the sacrifice. But there are 27 others, with hundreds of thousands of troops committed. Arab nations like Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Egypt, Syria and Kuwait. There are Muslim nations like Bangladesh and Pakistan. There are nations from Central America and South America, like Honduras and Argentina. There are nations from Africa, including Senegal and Niger. There are our traditional Western allies -- Australia, Italy, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Great Britain and Turkey. And there are old adversaries from the East -- Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria -- who have sent military contributions to the region.

There is no conflict in the history of mankind which can compare to the consensus and unity in the face of aggression that this conflict represents.

Comparisons have been made with Korea. People point to the fact that that war was fought under the UN flag. Certainly, there was a UN flag there. But the UN flag was a U.S. command. General MacArthur was the Commander, the sole Commander of UN forces.

The Korean war, despite its UN auspices, was largely a Western effort. In the Gulf today are forces from Latin America, Africa and the former Communist bloc. No continent is absent. That too is profound change.

And the UN flag is in the Gulf. The UN flag is there in the 12 Resolutions passed by the United Nations Security Council demanding Saddam Hussein's withdrawal from Kuwait. The UN flag is there in Resolution 678, which, under Article 48 of the UN Charter, explicitly authorized UN members to implement that Resolution if diplomacy failed. The Canadian flag now

flying in the Gulf is the UN flag. So too is the Bangladeshi flag, the Argentinean flag, the Honduran flag and the Czechoslovakian flag. We are all there because the UN determined what must be done.

The countries of the world have gathered to do what the UN authorized them to do, no more and no less than that. That too represents a change from the past. This is not a war in search of total victory or the destruction of a nation or its leader. This is a war to uphold a principle and fulfil an objective which the United Nations has declared to be necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security. That objective is to secure the withdrawal of Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. That has been made clear by the Prime Minister. It has been re-affirmed by King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. It has been re-stated by Secretary of State Baker and Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh.

The unity which the world brought to averting this conflict was unprecedented. The unity with which the Coalition now fights that conflict is also without parallel. But this crisis will not be over when the last gun is silenced and Kuwait is free. We must not only win the war; we must win the peace.

This war will change the world, just as change has characterized this conflict. We must make that change positive. That will not be easy. It may be as demanding as the war itself. But it must be done for if it is not, war will return to that region, as it has so often in the past. The United Nations has been given new credibility in its efforts to avert war and now in its efforts to act on its Resolutions. But that credibility will crumble if the United Nations does not act to heal the wounds this conflict has opened and fix the fault lines which have plagued that region for decades.

That will not be done through military might; it will be accomplished through political energy. It requires action across the spectrum, from peacekeeping to humanitarian assistance to economic development to disarmament to limits on the arms trade to an effective effort to deal, at long last, with the Arab-Israeli conflict. That effort will require commitment, imagination and perseverance by nations within the region and outside. It will require compromise. But we must not fail, for this is an opportunity which may never appear again.

Canada is mounting a comprehensive diplomatic strategy to this end. We are doing that with our friends in the Coalition and our partners in the United Nations.

There are many specific problems which need to be addressed, many negotiations which will be needed. But in the end, what we seek is the end of enmity between proud nations. It

is one of the great tragedies of history that the relations between Arabs and non-Arabs has been a catalogue of conflict and conquest. Some of the great civilizations of the world -- European, Arab, and Jewish -- have spent more time securing advantages at the expense of others than they have building peace together.

The conflict in the Gulf demonstrates once and for all the folly of that approach. And the changes which have allowed the world to respond to aggression there are changes which must lead us to reject that approach forever. We must build a peace which is not partial or prejudicial, a peace which will endure because it is just, because it is shared and because it works. That is our task now. And that is Canada's commitment.