

Statement

Secretary of
State for
External Affairs



Déclaration

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Affaires
extérieures

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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 HOSTED BY

THE CALGARY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**CALGARY, Alberta
March 1, 1991**

The world was challenged by Saddam Hussein's aggression and the world has been changed by our response to it. We must ensure that change remains positive. Securing respect for international law has been our immediate goal. Securing a lasting peace must be our long-term aim.

That is why we could not accept the conditional response from Iraq, particularly one that would have left open Iraq's claims to Kuwait, or limited the United Nations' ability to keep some sanctions until we had assurances about Iraq's weapons.

And that is why Canada has placed so much emphasis on what the world does after this war -- both to deal with issues like arms that we have ignored too long, to help reconstruction in the region, to foster long-term economic co-operation and to continue to strengthen the United Nations.

There is a particular and immediate challenge of economic reconstruction, particularly in Kuwait, and of environmental clean-up in the Gulf. We have already been active in responding to the latter.

Many of the requirements of rebuilding Kuwait are in fields of significant Canadian expertise. Our Ambassador to Kuwait, Larry Dickenson, returns to our Embassy in Kuwait City today, and we are already moving to connect what Kuwait needs with what Canada can provide. I expect to be back in the region myself, next week, to help make that connection, and am meeting here this afternoon with Albertans whose advice and co-operation we need.

The world did not unite in opposing aggression in Kuwait to have that region erupt again in yet another war in the months and years ahead. The world cannot let a victory become a truce, an occasion for nations to rearm, regroup and return to battle. The peace which now beckons must be more than a pause; it must become a pattern -- a period in which that region and the world absorbs the lessons of the past seven months and acts upon them -- boldly, with conviction and with imagination.

I want to talk to you today about Canada's efforts to prevent this war, to help secure victory once war became necessary, and, now, our commitment to construct a durable peace.

What is most remarkable about this war is what preceded it. The world did not lurch or leap into war. Individual nations did not respond unilaterally and with force. Instead, aggression was met with the united will of the world expressed through diplomacy, through the United Nations -- with 12 UN Security Council Resolutions, most passed without dissent, and an explicit pause for peace which gave Saddam Hussein every opportunity to reverse his course.

It could have been different. In the past, it often has. We are used to aggression being met either with a blind eye or with blind fury. But that did not happen here. Countries did not appease, and countries did not rush to arms. After August 2nd, what happened was an extraordinary period of persistent, insistent diplomacy -- the most widespread and intense in modern history -- a time when countries the world over, from every continent, of every faith and every ideology, sought to reverse aggression peacefully.

Canada played a proud part in that effort. We co-sponsored 10 of the 12 Security Council Resolutions. We worked ceaselessly to ensure that whatever action was taken by the world proceeded under UN auspices. Saddam Hussein had challenged international order. We wanted that challenge to be met in a way which built order, not corroded it. We wanted that challenge to be met by measures authorized by the only universal organization the world has at its disposal to uphold that order -- the United Nations.

That effort succeeded, but it might not have. Early on, President Bush was under pressure to launch a unilateral surgical strike in response to Saddam's aggression. The Prime Minister met with the President at Kennebunkport and said that would be a course which was neither wise nor acceptable. The U.S. did not launch that strike. The U.S. turned to the United Nations.

Later on, at the United Nations, the view was expressed that UN authorization was not needed for force to be used. Once again, our Ambassador to the United Nations argued forcefully that action had to be authorized by the UN -- not because we saw the UN as an end in itself, but because we saw the UN and its Charter as the means to the end we sought -- international order and the maintenance of international law.

And here too, our views -- shared, of course, by others -- prevailed. Every step, every action, undertaken by the world community to convince Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait proceeded under the explicit and clear authority of the United Nations Security Council.

In November, as the hope for peace began to fade, I met with Presidents Ozal and Mubarak and with King Hussein and Prime Minister Shamir, seeking their views. Based on those discussions, the Prime Minister wrote to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, on the eve of his last, fateful mission to Baghdad. That letter contained the basic elements of a peace package we thought might work: complete Iraqi withdrawal; a process for settling outstanding differences peacefully between Iraq and Kuwait; a guarantee of all borders from attack; and an undertaking to look at other problems which

plague the Middle East. Mr. Perez de Cuellar took to Baghdad a proposal which was very close to the Prime Minister's. That proposal was rejected by Saddam Hussein -- another door he slammed shut, another opportunity he spurned. How he must wish today that he had chosen a different path.

Canada's efforts were exhaustive. And so were the efforts of others. The world truly gave peace a chance. But Saddam Hussein forced the world to war.

And so, on January 16th, after the long pause for peace, Canada, along with 28 other members of the United Nations, began to do by force what could not be done by diplomacy.

Canadians are a peaceable people. We do not fight wars at will. For some countries, war is a national pastime, a permanent preoccupation. That is not our preference. It is not our practice. And it is not our principle.

Let me be clear what this war was not about.

It was not about oil. Certainly, oil played a role in Iraq's brazen calculus of aggression. Saddam Hussein's aggression had an effect on oil prices -- a devastating one for countries which depend on spot prices. And surely no one can now be sanguine at the thought of 40 per cent of the world's oil becoming another hostage for Hussein to manipulate. So oil is a factor. But oil is not a principle.

Canada did not put the lives of its men and women at risk for the sake of a few cents a litre.

Nor was this a war about democracy. Kuwait is not a democracy of the Canadian sort, although there were signs before August 2nd that it was moving in that direction. It is possible that Canadians would not choose the system Kuwaitis had. But that is not the point. Peace is not the province of the privileged who are lucky enough to be democracies. Peace is a universal right. Aggression is a universal wrong. The Charter of the United Nations and the entire structure of international law is based on those fundamental principles. Indeed, in the absence of adherence to these principles, building democracy becomes almost impossible.

Finally, Canada was not at war to defend the interests of others. Neither was Australia or Argentina, Syria or Senegal, Britain or Bangladesh, or any of the wide array of nations of the Coalition.

The principle we are defending is not a foreign principle. It is a Canadian principle. It is the principle that aggression cannot be tolerated as an exercise of state power. It

is the principle for which 100,000 Canadians gave their lives in two World Wars and Korea. It is the principle which led Canadians to help draft the United Nations Charter 46 years ago -- so that those sacrifices would not be necessary again. It is the principle which 43,000 Canadian peacekeepers have served to uphold, wearing the blue beret of the United Nations. That is the principle all countries have declared they share, but too few have shouldered.

That is why we are in the Gulf -- not for oil, not for democracy, not for others, but for a principle Canadians have always defended, a principle Canadians need if the order this country requires for its security and prosperity is to prevail.

People who oppose the Gulf War make a parallel which is perilous. They equate the avoidance of war with order. Well, order is not automatic internationally, any more than it is domestically. Order is based on principles. These principles must be defended. If they were not -- if transgressions went unpunished -- those principles would become hollow. Order would become disorder. And all nations would become hostages to fortune. International order would be nothing more than a pecking order for the powerful.

A world like that is a world in which Canada would suffer. Although we are a country of considerable influence, Canada is not a superpower. We depend on an order which goes beyond mere power, an order based on universal principles of international law, an order we are defending and building in the Persian Gulf today.

In the Gulf, we are not just defending Kuwait; we are defending Canada.

If the world had not responded to Saddam Hussein, in what other circumstances would it have acted? His invasion of Kuwait was the most clear-cut, brazen act of unprovoked aggression since the Second World War. If, with the Cold War over, and the old barriers gone, the world had turned its back, buried its neck in the sand, and added Kuwait to history's long list of innocent victims, what could we then say about order? Simply that it did not exist, that the world was a free-for-all, a playground for those with power, a graveyard for those without.

And, if the members of the United Nations were unable to act together here, what great power would ever bother again to turn to the UN? The UN would be discredited and then deserted, joining the League of Nations in the dustbin of history, another totem to the world's inability to move beyond the law of the jungle.

That is why this war was necessary. And that is why we must turn to building the peace with the same conviction we have brought to the battle.

Opportunity seldom arises without risk. And just as this war gives rise to a new opportunity -- and obligation -- to build an order based on law, so too it gives rise to risks we must confront with candour and conviction.

Those risks are real. There is the risk arising from deep popular resentment in the Arab world to yet another perceived intrusion by outsiders in their region. There is the risk of tension between the Arab States themselves, some of whom are with the Coalition, others of whom are not. There is the risk of continued enmity between Israel and her neighbours, a factor which Saddam Hussein has sought to cynically exploit, without success on the battlefield, but with some success in the streets. There is the risk that security will be sought in old solutions, solutions that will not work in the future any more than they have in the past -- the solutions of rearmament, of the endless pursuit of an always elusive balance of power. There is the risk that the United Nations will not be shored up, but will be shunned, treated as a cloak of convenience, a fig-leaf for national preference disguised as global principle.

We must act now to reduce those risks. That task will not be easy. Many of these problems exist not because of neglect but because of genuine difficulty. The solutions will be gradual. Many will be long-term. But we must start on that road now or history will judge our accomplishments in the Gulf as minimal -- another opportunity missed, another challenge in which we failed.

Let me start with the principles of peace. I believe four apply.

First, peace will only be built if it involves the nations of the region itself. An imposed peace will be an impotent peace.

Second, peace must be just and fair. The United Nations and international law have provided for recourse to compensation for aggression. But victory must not become a vendetta.

Third, a durable peace will require addressing the full spectrum of problems which plague that region. That means dealing with other conflicts -- including the Arab-Israeli conflict. That means addressing the symptoms of conflict -- the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the arms trade, the constant chase for spheres of influence. And that means addressing underlying causes of conflict -- the uneven

distribution of wealth between and within societies, the lack of economic co-operation between countries and the fragility of political systems which need greater popular participation.

Fourth, and finally, peace requires the UN. After August 2nd, the world came to the UN to reverse aggression peacefully. After January 15th, when the search for peace had failed, the members of the UN resolved to reverse aggression through force. And now that victory is at hand, the members of the UN must use that organization to build a peace that works.

On February 12th, the Prime Minister put forward elements of a package of proposals which we believe begin to convert these principles to practice. We are exploring those actively -- with the United Nations, with our Coalition partners, and with others inside and outside the region. I will not repeat them here. But I do wish to focus and expand on one of them: The obligation to end the arms race.

For 45 years, the search for security in the Middle East has been pursued largely through the avenue of arms. That search has failed. It has been folly. Despite billions and billions of dollars spent on arms -- what have we seen? We have seen five wars between Israel and her neighbours. We have seen Lebanon reduced to rubble.

And we have seen this war, a war in which 95 per cent of the arms in the arsenal of Saddam Hussein came from the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, who are mandated to uphold international peace and security; a war in which dozens of companies in the West helped give Saddam the capacity for chemical warfare; a war in which the costs to the Coalition of this conflict far exceed any profits which have gone into Swiss bank accounts or national treasuries; a war in which our soldiers are shot at by guns that Coalition governments sold to Iraq.

Twenty-eight nations supplied both Iran and Iraq during their eight-year war. Between 1984 and 1988, the dollar value of major weapons exports to Iraq was higher than to any other country in the developing or developed world. During that same period, Middle Eastern countries occupied five of the top six spots as destinations for arms. The Middle East -- much of it underdeveloped -- has spent a larger portion of its gross national product (GNP) on arms than any other region in the world.

And there is a worrying parallel phenomenon -- the growth of new suppliers in the developing world, many of whom put few restrictions on their arms exports. Between 1984 and 1988, 99 per cent of Syria's arms exports went to countries at war. Eighty-six per cent of Egypt's exports and 40 per cent of Brazil's also went to states in conflict.

This is all insane. It must end. If it does not -- if the world continues to treat this region as an auction block and not a tinderbox, we will have failed. The UN has imposed an arms embargo against Iraq. When this war is over, the UN must become engaged in a serious effort to control the sale of arms, not only to Iraq, but to that region and others.

The difficulties here are enormous:

1. Every country is entitled to defend itself. But when does prudent defence become destabilizing offence? How much is enough?
2. Although arms can contribute to conflict, arms are also a symptom of conflict. Countries have real security problems to address. How can arms be reduced when unresolved conflicts persist?
3. Although Canada's economy depends comparatively little on arms exports, the economies of others are heavily dependent. How can they be convinced to accept more effective control and restraint?
4. Restrictions to the arms trade must not be seen as a discriminatory strategy perpetrated by the North against the countries in the South. We must all build down.
5. When is a weapon defensive or offensive? What makes a weapon stabilizing or destabilizing? Who decides? Who interprets?
6. The distinction between military and non-military goods is becoming increasingly blurred. Often they are indistinguishable. Chemicals used in plastics and fertilizers can be chemicals used in weapons. How can restraint in the arms trade be secured without also restricting trade generally?

Those difficulties demand prudence and caution. But they do not remove the requirement to act. In order to give political energy to negotiations now under way and to launch new initiatives where needed, the Prime Minister has proposed a World Summit on the Instruments of War and Weapons of Mass Destruction to be held under UN auspices. The Prime Minister has discussed this initiative with the Secretary-General of the UN who gave the proposal his full and enthusiastic support. Last week, I discussed it in Stockholm with my colleagues from the Nordic countries. They too are supportive. We will pursue this with vigour in the weeks and months ahead. We will also be looking at ways to prevent the use of environmental spoilage as a weapon of

war as practised by Saddam Hussein in his deliberate pollution of the Gulf.

As part of our initiative to address the arms control problems thrown into relief by the Gulf War, I am announcing today that Canada will take the following additional steps.

First, we will propose that the countries who are signatory to the Conventional Forces Agreement in Europe undertake not to export arms affected by that agreement to countries outside Europe. The residue from the Cold War in Europe should not become the raw material for wars elsewhere.

Second, Canada will move immediately to increase the number of precursors for chemical weapons on our Export Control List from 14 to 50, in order to restrict the possibility of Canada being used as a source or conduit for components of chemical arms.

And lastly, I am releasing today, for the first time ever, a Report on the Export of Military Goods from Canada. That report, which will be an annual publication, itemizes both the category and destination of all military goods exported. That report is intended to demonstrate Canada's strong commitment to greater transparency in the arms trade, a transparency which is needed so that the world knows what the traffic in arms is.

These initiatives will not, in and of themselves, address the arms trade challenge. Canada's share of the world arms trade is miniscule. Action -- concerted action -- is required by others, especially those whose policies and practices are less restrictive than our own. But they contribute -- and I believe they indicate our firm commitment to moving from hope to action.

Order is not built by appeasement. International law is not strengthened by rhetoric. Action is necessary, and so too, sometimes, is sacrifice and suffering. This war has made that point. But this war makes another point. We will never build order or strengthen the rule of law if we approach those tasks only with the mentality of firefighters. Disaster control is no way to put in place a peaceful world. Mutual security must be strengthened; confidence must be bolstered; stability must be deepened -- so that disasters are less likely and less likely to escalate when they occur. These tasks do not share the glory and the emotion of battle. But they are more necessary than ever, more vital to our survival as a planet where seclusion is impossible and security is indivisible.

The world raised the stakes and the standards when it responded to Saddam Hussein's aggression against Kuwait. And in so doing, the world has posed a new challenge to itself -- to

live and learn or to forget and fail. Let the Coalition which now prevails endure and widen and deepen. A coalition not to fight aggression, but to build peace. A coalition to construct comity from the consequences of conflict. That must be our new objective. Let us make it our next victory.