

Statement

Secretary of
State for
External Affairs



Déclaration

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Affaires
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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 THE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE (SCEAIT)

ON THE GULF CRISIS

OTTAWA

October 25, 1990.

I propose to begin today with a brief overview of the Gulf crisis: its origins and significance, the international response to it, the existing situation and how it may evolve.

As you are well aware, the crisis was triggered by Iraq's August 2 invasion of Kuwait. Since that time, despite overwhelming international condemnation of its action and calls for its withdrawal, Iraq has declared the annexation of Kuwait and has reinforced its military position on the ground.

Iraq's action has precipitated the most serious international crisis of recent times. This in a region of long-standing volatility and deep and abiding animosities fuelled by poverty and economic disparities, religious and national enmities and the extremism and indiscriminate hatred which these breed. This is the region of the eight-year Iran-Iraq war, recurrent domestic strife in Lebanon, of repeated Arab-Israeli wars, and cycles of vicious killings between Israelis and Palestinians of which the recent killings in Jerusalem are but the latest distressing example. In these circumstances, the Gulf crisis has explosive potential. The states of the region are heavily armed adversaries, disputing pre-eminence, influence, and control of vital reserves of oil.

All of these problems are crucial to peace in the area and must be addressed by the world community in multilateral or other fora with a determined commitment to find just and lasting solutions. But solutions to these problems cannot be linked to a solution to the Gulf crisis. Iraq's actions have created an additional problem of critical proportions involving grave dangers. None of the other long-existing problems of the entire Middle East region can be successfully addressed until the essence of the Gulf crisis is resolved. Only when this is achieved will it be possible to focus on other fundamental issues whose solution is essential to establishing any enduring stability and peace in the Middle East region.

This crisis takes place in a new international climate brought about by the end of the cold war. The acquisition of territory by force has represented dangerous and objectionable international behaviour for most of this century. But it is only now the world community can make the objection both credible and tenable. Iraq's actions represent a fundamental challenge for the international community in an era when the end of old super-power rivalries have opened the way for a more harmonious and co-operative approach to resolving international problems and protecting peace and security.

At last, the UN has had a chance to work in the way that its founders envisaged. From the beginning of the crisis, the Security Council has demonstrated determination and resolve. It has adopted a series of resolutions and in doing so initiated actions that were clearly set out in the UN Charter as appropriate responses to aggression. It has done this with the support of all the Permanent Members of the Council; indeed the key decisions have been unanimous on the part of its Members.

The UN's handling of this crisis shows that the world body can work. But it must follow through. Otherwise, the fresh start which the end of the cold war has permitted the UN could come to a crashing halt.

The international consensus opposed to Iraq's use of force to occupy and annex a sovereign state, and to hold against their will thousands of citizens of third countries, including Canada, is the broadest and most complete consensus the world has seen in the modern era.

There is a firm international resolve that innocent bystanders must be released and that Iraq's occupation of Kuwait must be reversed. Iraq is isolated. Now, compliance with the Security Council's resolutions is the critical need.

The Security Council resolutions have established a comprehensive, obligatory set of economic sanctions as the means to bring this about by convincing Iraq that it must withdraw and restore Kuwait's legitimate sovereignty. The Council has authorized necessary enforcement measures to make the sanctions as effective as possible. Over 25 countries have now contributed forces to participate in enforcement of the UN sanctions and to deter further aggression by Iraq.

Even before the Council could act, however, Saudi Arabia faced an immediate critical need to defend itself. Saddam Hussein's armies were massing menacingly on the Saudi border with the ability to attack towards the vast, vital and tempting Saudi oil fields. Faced with this imminent threat, the Government of Saudi Arabia appealed for international assistance to defend itself. The U.S. and others responded properly and immediately to the Saudi concern, with obvious effect.

- This then is the essence of the crisis:
- Iraq's action has breached international peace and security and the essence of international law;
 - Iraq's occupation of Kuwait has been condemned and rejected by an overwhelming preponderance of the international community; and
 - Iraq has failed to comply with the UN Security Council resolutions which reflect this resolve.

If peaceful means do not produce the necessary compliance, the UN Charter envisages the use of force to ensure compliance with the resolutions the Security Council has passed.

The risks of military engagement between Iraq and the international consensus arrayed against it are real. And the human, political and economic costs of such a conflict would be real and substantial. The consequences would certainly be enormous for the whole Middle East region. The costs to Iraq are potentially catastrophic. But there is a greater catastrophe: to allow Iraq to succeed.

Such a conflict is not inevitable. But Iraq must understand the conviction and determination of the international community. It is evident that Iraq only understands the language of strength. The most effective way to establish peace is to ensure Iraqi understanding that the alternative to compliance will be the use of force.

Iraq's use of force cannot be rewarded except at peril to the foundation of international peace and security. Over the decades since the end of the Second World War, Canada has invested enormous effort in international institution-building on the basis of that foundation and in the creation of effective means to achieve the peaceful settlement of disputes. Iraq has to be convinced to withdraw and use these.

Measures and fora for the peaceful settlement of disputes such as those which ostensibly motivated Iraq's action have long existed and successfully resolved international disputes over territory, navigation and the sharing of oil, mineral and other resources and revenues without armed conflict. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the best known of these institutions; the Permanent Court of Arbitration has procedures for the establishment

of panels of international jurists; the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes has conciliation rules tailored for commercial disagreements. We in Canada have used the ICJ and ad hoc court of arbitrations to manage disputes with the United States and France. In the case of the Gulf, however, such procedures could not be initiated until Iraq withdraws from Kuwait and permits the departure of third-country nationals.

Canada's Involvement

Let me turn now to Canada's involvement in this crisis. I have concentrated thus far on the peace and security aspect of the Gulf crisis but there are other elements as well. Severe economic and humanitarian hardships have been imposed on citizens of many states, including Canadians, and their safety put in jeopardy. The costs to many states because of the human outflow from Iraq and Kuwait, the loss of jobs, earnings and savings, and the burden of higher oil prices have all imposed serious difficulties on the economic well being of many states and individuals around the world. The consequences of these costs will be with us for some time to come.

I would like therefore to sketch very briefly Canada's response to these various aspects.

Peace and Security

Even if Security Council deliberations were televised, which they are not for very good reasons, what goes on there would make far less good television than the departure of naval vessels or high-technology fighters taking off two by two. But what we have been doing at the UN is no less an essential part of our response to the crisis.

As a member of the UN Security Council, we have been active promoters of the means to redress this situation according to international law and in line with the hopes we all have for the collective machinery of the UN. Ambassador Fortier and his team have been tireless in helping draft and helping pass resolutions that are clear and principled, and balanced to ensure they do the job they are intended to do without creating unnecessary tension or debate. Although the front page of the New York Times has suggested that this has sometimes been to argue for greater

moderation than desired by others, the degree of unanimity of the major players on the Security Council, has been, quite frankly, extraordinary. Iraq's breach of international law and the provisions of the UN Charter have called forth the collective response intended by the Charter, and we have accepted the obligations involved.

We have worked to ensure that the UN sanctions against Iraq are as effective as possible with the objective of bringing about compliance with Security Council decisions without further

conflict. On August 4, Canada formally ended all trade with both Iraq and occupied Kuwait, froze the assets of both governments and ended the special arrangements with Iraq covering business promotion, as well as other exchanges. We have provided three ships and a squadron of CF-18s to assist in the enforcement of the UN sanctions. We are making a full and significant contribution to this multilateral effort. It is vital to recognize the multilateral character of this force. It is the world against this aggression.

Economic and Humanitarian Aspects

On the humanitarian front, we have committed \$75 million to assist with the care and repatriation of displaced persons to their home countries, to assist those countries to meet the costs of reintegration and to help those countries in the crisis region whose economies have been hurt most seriously by the impact of the crisis.

Safety of Canadians

From the beginning of this crisis, we have done everything in our power to ensure the protection and safety of Canadians caught in the region. We managed to assist the large majority in returning home. Unfortunately, not all Canadians have been able to leave.

The holding of Canadians and other foreigners against their will is deeply abhorrent to all of us. For their dedicated service toward safeguarding and evacuating Canadians at risk, I want to pay a special tribute to the five staff members of our mission in Kuwait for the extraordinary devotion to duty they showed in

remaining at their post in the most trying conditions over the last several weeks.

As far as we are aware, only perhaps 20 Canadians remain in Kuwait, and another 60 in Iraq. Through our mission in Baghdad, we will continue to do what we can to provide consular assistance. And we, like others, will continue to press Iraq to permit all individuals who wish to leave to do so. But neither we nor others are willing to allow them to be used as bargaining chips in Iraq's attempt to wrest concessions from the world arrayed against it.

Let me conclude by reiterating that it is vital for Iraq to understand that unless there is compliance with the will of the UN Security Council, force will be used. That is the best chance we have for avoiding the use of force.

Canada's role in international conflict has often been one of creative diplomacy. Our most creative diplomacy has been in building international institutions founded on shared principles and the rule of law, and in the creation of collective powers to respond when those principles and laws are violated. These are the achievements our diplomacy must now defend. Iraq cannot be rewarded by a partial settlement, or any other comfort, without complete compliance with the Security Council's decisions. Otherwise, our diplomacy will have failed, not just in this crisis, but in what we have been doing for 45 years. At stake is the security of countries everywhere and the world's chances to at last benefit from our collective machinery to protect and promote peace.