



PERMANENT MISSION OF  
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**STATEMENT BY**

*His Excellency Mr. Stafford Neil  
Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations*

**IN THE  
OPEN DEBATE OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL**

**ON**

**THE SITUATION BETWEEN IRAQ AND KUWAIT**

New York, March 26, 2003

*[Please Check Against Delivery]*

Mr. President

I thank the members of the Security Council for convening this open debate at the request of the Permanent Representative of Malaysia acting on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). This is a critical time for the world community – we are involved with the question of war and peace, an issue which can affect the survival of all of us. The Security Council has the onerous responsibility under Article 24 of the Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security on behalf of the international community. It is a responsibility from which it must not resile and its task is to find answers however difficult or complex the problem may be.

Mr. President

It is a matter of profound regret for Jamaica that military action against Iraq was initiated by a transatlantic coalition on Wednesday of last week. Jamaica has emphasized all along the importance of Iraq fulfilling its obligations. Indeed Jamaica will always insist that every Member State, not only Iraq, must comply with resolutions of the Security Council. Nor will Jamaica ever condone the so-called "right" of any country to develop weapons of mass destruction, engage in acts of repression against its citizens or support terrorism. But we have expressed our view and we hold to it that there was a viable alternative to war, the way of peaceful disarmament through an inspections process which had not been exhausted. Regrettably, there was resort to the use of force and what we are now seeing are the harsh realities, death and destruction caused by military conflict. We have seen in vivid detail a powerful demonstration of sophisticated technology and destructive power of modern weaponry. The aerial bombardment of Baghdad, the wailing sirens and the thunder of explosions have no doubt succeeded in producing fear and trepidation especially among civilians in Baghdad. We fear that this may just be the beginning. The scars of war are deep and generations of Iraqis will bear them, as will generations of Americans and other citizens of the international community. We deeply fear the prospect of a humanitarian disaster from a siege of Baghdad and other Iraqi cities and from the consequences of continued fighting.

In the circumstances, as the Secretary General has emphasized, a heavy responsibility for the protection of the civilians lies in the hands of the belligerents and occupying powers to ensure that loss of life and suffering of the civilian population is kept at a minimum. The role of the United Nations is twofold. Firstly, it must insist that humanitarian aid is provided for the Iraqi victims of this war. Secondly, it must exert its influence to bring about a ceasefire to end what could become the massacre of innocent Iraqis.

Mr. President

Jamaica believes that it is never too late for peace. We therefore urge the Security Council to remain engaged and to take bold steps to achieve a cessation of hostilities and spare the peoples of the world the horrors of continued war.

Mr. President

The nations that have undertaken military action in Iraq are countries with which we are bound by ties of history and shared values of freedom. That very friendship, which we highly value, obliges us to make heard today our small voice for peace. This is a time for a sincere, bold and unequivocal search for peace to save the lives of combatants and the innocent; to stop the possible spread of war; and to secure mankind's future in this troubled world. Our position is rooted in a deep commitment to the cause of peace and comes with a sense of sadness about the outbreak and consequences of war. It also comes from a concern about the implications for the future of the multilateral system and for the realization of ideals of collective security under the Charter, the rule of law and our collective search to achieve a higher destiny for mankind.

Beyond what is happening in Iraq and transcending the specific circumstances, there is a challenge for all of us. A challenge to ensure that the collective wisdom of the United Nations and of the Security Council in particular be not eroded by the will of the mighty.

The Security Council must remain the source of legitimacy for any collective action and it should not be compromised or undermined by any new doctrines or policies inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. President

At this critical juncture we urge the Council to remain active and to continue to seek ways and means for restoring peace and addressing the humanitarian emergency in Iraq based on unity of purpose and in accordance with the high ideals and principles of the Charter. That must always be our guide.

Thank you, Mr. President.