



The

FW de Klerk Foundation

Continuing the miracle into South Africa's second decade

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The Possibility of a War Against Iraq

Statement by FW de Klerk in response to queries that he has received regarding his views on the possibility of a war against Iraq:

“The present threat of war against Iraq is one of the most serious challenges to have confronted the world since the collapse of Soviet communism. Large-scale warfare in the Middle-East could have very far-reaching and unpredictable global political and economic consequences:

- it could seriously destabilise fragile governments in a volatile region;
- it could exacerbate already serious tensions between Israelis and Palestinians;
- it could deepen the rift between the Islamic world and the West;
- it could disrupt oil supplies with very negative consequences for the international economy;
- it could lead to serious rifts between the United States and some of its key European allies; and
- it could have very negative implications for the development of international law and the credibility of the United Nations.

The crisis has brought to the fore a number of questions that are of the greatest importance for the maintenance of global peace and the development of international law, including:

- the need to stop the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons through strict adherence to the NNPT and international conventions on biological and chemical warfare;
- the need to take effective steps to ensure that such weapons do not fall into the hands of terrorists;
- the need for the international community to take strong and resolute collective action to neutralise such threats; and
- the need for all countries to act in unison and within the framework of international law.

We should have no illusions regarding the central issues:

- There should be no sympathy whatsoever for Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi regime which is one of the most brutal and deceitful in the world.
- The Iraqi regime has proved time and again that it responds only to sustained and credible pressure. The only reason that Saddam Hussein is at last beginning to allow a credible process of international inspection is due primarily to the resolution shown by the United States and some of its allies.
- If international pressure on the Iraqi regime is not resolutely maintained – as was the case after the Gulf War – the regime will continue to pose a serious and

growing threat to its own people, to its neighbours and to the international community.

Regardless of all these circumstances, military action that is not supported by a sufficient international consensus will be counter-productive and dangerous and will undermine international law and the role of the United Nations.

In this difficult situation I believe that the international community should:

- resolutely continue and expand the process of thorough and credible inspections to ensure that there is no possibility that the regime retains or develops weapons of mass destruction;
- closely monitor and ensure that the Iraqi regime neither interacts with, or supports, international terrorists;
- back up this process with a credible threat of concerted collective military action;
- continue to expose and resolutely oppose the brutal and dictatorial Iraqi regime and support a process of genuine democratisation for the Iraqi people;
- maintain a united front and ensure that all its own actions are within the framework of international law;
- continue to combat the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons through strict adherence to international conventions with the ultimate goal of eliminating such weapons from the arsenals of all the countries of the world.”

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