



PRIME MINISTER

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

**PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT
PRESS CONFERENCE 28 FEBRUARY 1991**

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IRAQ'S OCCUPATION OF KUWAIT HAS COME TO AN END.

MILITARY OPERATIONS BY THE COALITION FORCES, CONDUCTED UNDER RESOLUTION 678 OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, ARE BEING SUSPENDED AT THIS MOMENT.

TERMS HAVE BEEN SET DOWN FOR A FORMAL CEASE-FIRE, WHICH WE HOPE CAN BE CONCLUDED WITHOUT DELAY.

ALL THAT CAN PREVENT THIS SUSPENSION BECOMING PERMANENT IS A REFUSAL BY SADDAM HUSSEIN TO COMPLY WITH THE TOTALLY REASONABLE CONDITIONS LAID DOWN BY THE ALLIES.

ON MY INSTRUCTIONS, THE CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCE HAS DIRECTED AUSTRALIA'S TASK FORCE IN THE GULF TO SUSPEND HOSTILITIES UNDER THE TERMS ANNOUNCED BY PRESIDENT BUSH THIS AFTERNOON.

SPEAKING FOR AUSTRALIA, AND SPEAKING FOR MYSELF, THIS IS A MOMENT OF GREAT RELIEF AND HOPE, OF GREAT PRIDE, AND ALSO OF GREAT SORROW.

WE ARE SAD THAT IT HAS BEEN NECESSARY TO RESORT TO WAR TO RIGHT THE WRONG PERPETRATED BY SADDAM HUSSEIN ON 2 AUGUST WHEN HE INVADED KUWAIT.

BUT WE ARE GLAD THAT THE WORLD HAS STOOD UNITED AGAINST HIS ACT OF AGGRESSION, EVEN TO THE ULTIMATE SANCTION OF WAR.

WE ARE GLAD THAT THE UNITED NATIONS HAS STOOD TRUE TO ITS PRINCIPLES, AND THAT IT HAS SUCCEEDED, THROUGH THE SECURITY COUNCIL, IN APPLYING THOSE PRINCIPLES IN ACTION.

WE ARE PROUD OF THE CONTRIBUTION WE IN AUSTRALIA HAVE MADE, AND ESPECIALLY THE CONTRIBUTION OF MEMBERS OF OUR AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE, TO THIS GREAT INTERNATIONAL UNDERTAKING.

AND TODAY ABOVE ALL WE REJOICE THAT THE WAR HAS BEEN WON QUICKLY, AND WITH SO FEW CASUALTIES TO OUR ALLIED FORCES.

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FOR THE PEOPLE OF KUWAIT, THIS VICTORY BRINGS TO AN END OVER SEVEN MONTHS OF OCCUPATION MARKED BY PERSECUTION, ATROCITIES AND DESTRUCTION. WE SHARE THEIR JOY IN LIBERATION.

FOR IRAQ ALSO THE PRICE HAS BEEN TERRIBLE. WE GRIEVE FOR THE PEOPLE OF THIS TRAGIC COUNTRY, AND WE HOPE THAT THEY CAN QUICKLY BIND THEIR WOUNDS AND REBUILD THEIR NATION AS A RESPECTED AND RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THE END OF THE WAR IS NOT THE END OF THE CRISIS. MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE TO BRING STABILITY TO THE GULF, AND TO BRING A WIDER, DURABLE PEACE TO THE MIDDLE EAST.

THE END OF THE WAR SHOULD BRING NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO ADDRESS THESE OLD PROBLEMS. OUR HOPE IS THAT THE SENSE OF COMMITMENT AND COOPERATION WHICH SO MANY NATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD HAVE SHOWN IN CONFRONTING SADDAM HUSSEIN WILL BE SHOWN AGAIN IN MEETING THE CHALLENGES AHEAD.

AUSTRALIA WILL PLAY ITS PART IN MAKING SURE THAT THIS VICTORY IS A VICTORY FOR ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE MIDDLE EAST.

BUT IT IS MORE THAN THAT. IT IS A VICTORY FOR PEOPLE EVERYWHERE WHO WOULD LIVE IN PEACE. IT REAFFIRMS THAT THE WORLD IS INDEED A WORLD COMMUNITY; THAT THE WORLD COMMUNITY IS UNITED IN ITS COMMITMENT TO RESIST AGGRESSION; AND THAT THE WORLD COMMUNITY HAS, IN THE UNITED NATIONS, AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT TO CONFRONT THE AGGRESSOR, IF ALL ELSE FAILS, WITH THE ONLY ARGUMENT HE UNDERSTANDS - THE ARGUMENT OF FORCE.

WE CANNOT PREDICT THE SHAPE OF THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ORDER. BUT WE DO KNOW THAT THE COMPREHENSIVE DEFEAT OF SADDAM HUSSEIN IN KUWAIT WILL STAND AS A WARNING BEACON FOR YEARS TO COME TO ANYONE WHO WOULD CONSIDER AGGRESSION.

SO THE WORLD IS A SAFER PLACE TODAY.

IN THIS GREAT ACHIEVEMENT, THE UNITED STATES HAS PLAYED A SPECIAL PART. THROUGHOUT THIS CRISIS, THE UNITED STATES HAS EMPLOYED ITS AUTHORITY AND ITS POWER TO SERVE INTERESTS WHICH WERE NOT AMERICA'S ALONE, BUT WERE THE INTERESTS OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE. PRESIDENT BUSH AND THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES HAVE OUR ADMIRATION FOR THEIR CONDUCT AND THEIR LEADERSHIP, AND OUR THANKS FOR THEIR COMMITMENT AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO SACRIFICE IN A CAUSE WE ALL SHARE.

FINALLY I TURN TO OUR OWN PEOPLE WHO HAVE RISKED THEIR LIVES IN THIS GREAT ENTERPRISE - THE CREWS OF OUR SHIPS AND THEIR SUPPORT TEAMS, OUR DIVERS, OUR MEDICAL TEAMS AND OUR EXCHANGE PERSONNEL, ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE ADF WHO HAVE HELPED TO SUPPORT THEM, AND OF COURSE THEIR FAMILIES AND LOVED ONES LEFT AT HOME.

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WE ARE PROUD OF THE SKILL THAT OUR SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN HAVE SHOWN, WHICH HAS OFTEN WON FOR THEM THE PRIVILEGE OF DOING DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS TASKS. THEY HAVE DONE HONOUR TO THEMSELVES, TO THEIR SERVICE, AND TO THE NATION.

WE IN TURN HONOUR THEM. WE REJOICE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN SPARED CASUALTIES, AND WE HOPE THAT WE CAN WELCOME THEM SAFELY HOME SOON.

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