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LETTER DATED 16 JANUARY 1991 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL  
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text, in French and English, of the statement which I made yesterday on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait.

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Javier PEREZ de CUELLAR

Annex

Statement by the Secretary-General to the press on  
15 January 1991

As 15 January advances, and the world stands poised between peace and war, I most sincerely appeal to President Saddam Hussein to turn the course of events away from catastrophe and towards a new era of justice and harmony based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

All our efforts in this direction will fail unless Iraq can signify its readiness to comply with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, beginning with resolution 660 (1990).

If this commitment is made, and clear and substantial steps taken to implement these resolutions, a just peace, with all its benefits, will follow. I therefore urge President Saddam Hussein to commence, without delay, the total withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

Once this process is well under way, I wish to assure him, on the basis of understandings that I have received from Governments at the highest level, that neither Iraq nor its forces will be attacked by those arrayed in the international coalition against his country.

Further, with the commencement of withdrawal, as Secretary-General of the United Nations, I would, with the consent of the parties concerned, and the agreement of the Security Council, be prepared immediately to deploy United Nations observers and, if necessary, United Nations forces to certify the withdrawal and to ensure that hostilities do not erupt on the ground.

In addition, with compliance of the resolutions, I would urge the Security Council to review its decisions imposing sanctions against Iraq. I would also encourage a process whereby foreign forces deployed in the area would be phased out.

Peace in the region requires that all its problems be resolved justly and equitably, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

I have every assurance, once again from the highest levels of government, that with the resolution of the present crisis, every effort will be made to address, in a comprehensive manner, the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestinian question. I pledge my every effort to this end.

As I stated to the Council last night, all of us are aware of the extreme gravity of the decisions to be made in the period ahead. No one and no nation can - except with a heavy heart - resort to the other "necessar, means" implied by resolution 678 (1990), knowing in advance that tragic and unpredictable consequences can follow.

I trust, in the circumstances, that wisdom and statesmanship will prevail in all quarters in order to move decisively away from conflict. In appealing to President Saddam Hussein today, I wish him to know that I will readily devote my every capacity to working with him, and with all others concerned, to this end.

In the tenth and final year of my tenure as Secretary-General of the United Nations, no cause would give me greater satisfaction than to set the Middle East as a whole on the road to just and lasting peace. And no disappointment would be greater and more tragic than to find the nations of the world engaging in a conflict that none of their peoples want.

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