



GULF CRISIS

ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE, UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA Resolution 90.86

90.86 It was resolved that Standing Committee:

1. deplore the action of the Iraqi government in its invasion and annexation of the sovereign state of Kuwait;
2. welcome the prompt initiative of the United Nations in condemning the Iraqi action and in its call upon Iraq to totally withdraw from Kuwait; and affirm the role of the UN in seeking a peaceful and political solution to the conflict;
3. express its disappointment and disagreement with the decision of the Federal Government so quickly to make a military response in the Gulf conflict; the action to make a military response in the Gulf conflict; the action of sending warships to the Gulf has jeopardised Australia's ability to be involved in a peacemaking role and has made it more difficult for the UN to seek a peaceful negotiated statement;

the Committee's disappointment is heightened by the fact that Australia has played a very constructive role in working for nuclear disarmament and the banning and destruction of chemical weapons in recent years; furthermore, Australia has been seen until now as a friend of the Arab States;

4. express its regret that Australia has moved away from a peacemaking role to an active involvement in the conflict without the opportunity for debate in the Parliament or even the Cabinet;
5. see great danger in creating an enemy image; it recognises that in the present conflict, Arabic people in Australia feel threatened by the anti-Iraqi/anti-Islamic sentiment that has developed; the Committee calls on the members of the church and on all fellow Australians to avoid all denigration of Arabic-speaking neighbours, and to actively oppose all racist activity in the community;
6. request the President, General Secretary, Director of Mission and the Secretary and Associate General of Social Responsibility and Justice to consult with the Middle East Council of Churches and Middle Eastern ethnic organisations and church groups in Australia, and to take whatever further action they consider appropriate in the light of those consultations.