

This is all insane. It must end. If it does not -- if the world continues to treat this region as an auction block and not a tinderbox, we will have failed. The UN has imposed an arms embargo against Iraq. When this war is over, the UN must become engaged in a serious effort to control the sale of arms, not only to Iraq, but to that region and others.

The difficulties here are enormous:

1. Every country is entitled to defend itself. But when does prudent defence become destabilizing offence? How much is enough?
2. Although arms can contribute to conflict, arms are also a symptom of conflict. Countries have real security problems to address. How can arms be reduced when unresolved conflicts persist?
3. Although Canada's economy depends comparatively little on arms exports, the economies of others are heavily dependent. How can they be convinced to accept more effective control and restraint?
4. Restrictions to the arms trade must not be seen as a discriminatory strategy perpetrated by the North against the countries in the South. We must all build down.
5. When is a weapon defensive or offensive? What makes a weapon stabilizing or destabilizing? Who decides? Who interprets?
6. The distinction between military and non-military goods is becoming increasingly blurred. Often they are indistinguishable. Chemicals used in plastics and fertilizers can be chemicals used in weapons. How can restraint in the arms trade be secured without also restricting trade generally?

Those difficulties demand prudence and caution. But they do not remove the requirement to act. In order to give political energy to negotiations now under way and to launch new initiatives where needed, the Prime Minister has proposed a World Summit on the Instruments of War and Weapons of Mass Destruction to be held under UN auspices. The Prime Minister has discussed this initiative with the Secretary-General of the UN who gave the proposal his full and enthusiastic support. Last week, I discussed it in Stockholm with my colleagues from the Nordic countries. They too are supportive. We will pursue this with vigour in the weeks and months ahead. We will also be looking at ways to prevent the use of environmental spoilage as a weapon of